



**The Later History**  
**OF**  
**British, Spanish, and**  
**Portuguese America**



**NARRATIVE AND CRITICAL**  
**HISTORY OF AMERICA**

**EDITED**

**By JUSTIN WINSOR**

**LIBRARIAN OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY.**

**CORRESPONDING SECRETARY MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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[The cut on the title represents the arms of Brazil.]

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# NARRATIVE AND CRITICAL HISTORY OF AMERICA

## CHAPTER I.

### THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY.<sup>1</sup>

BY GEORGE E. ELLIS, D D, LL. D.,

*President Massachusetts Historical Society.*

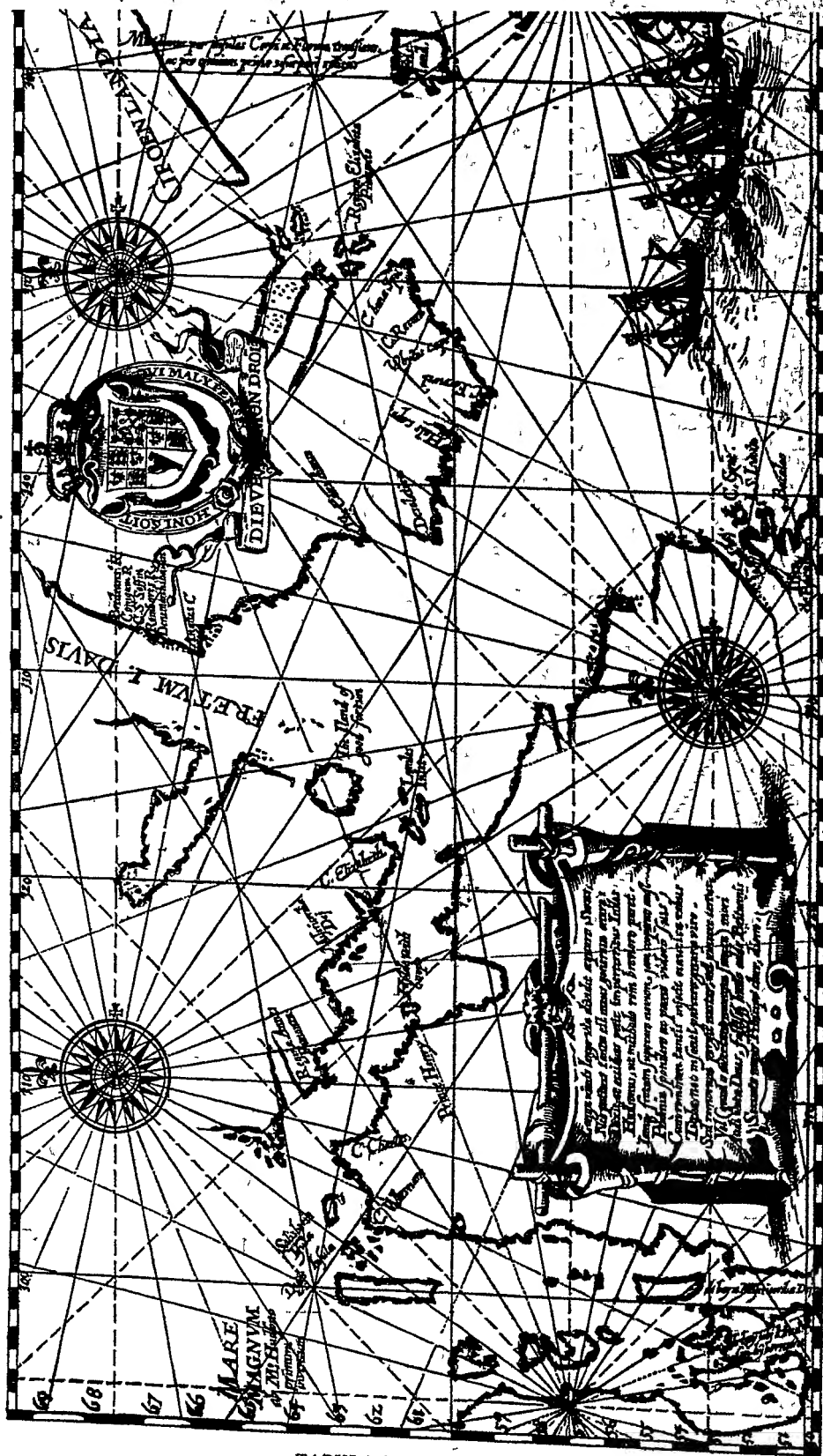
THE most lavish liberality or generosity exhibited in this world of men is shown in the bestowal of a gift which does not belong to the donor of it. In such cases there is generally a very slight knowledge, if not an absolute ignorance, of the quality and value of the gift, so the terms of it are likely to be not only very general but very loose and vague. Indeed, part of the charm of such a gift will consist in the undefined possibilities, the imagined revelations, which may go with it. The burdens and responsibilities attending the acceptance of it, and the trespasses upon the rights of others, the injuries likely to be inflicted upon them, and the struggles, animosities, and controversies, with the risk of final discomfiture, in the maintenance of such a possession, are either not taken into account, or are winked out of sight.

These familiar truths were signally illustrated, on a very grand scale too, in the gifts made by ecclesiastics and monarchs of the old world of expanses of territory on this western hemisphere, when opened by the early navigators. Under the latest advances of astronomical science, spaces in the moon might now be almost as definitely assigned to claimants for them as were the regions of this new world. Before it was known whether what had been discovered here were an island, an archipelago, or a continent, it was made over in a lump by the Pope to the monarchs of Spain. It was under the famous Bull of Demarcation that Spain was shortly after, by a convention with Portugal, forced to divide to a small extent with that power. Notwithstanding such papal partiality,<sup>2</sup> Francis of France soon claimed his

<sup>1</sup> [Dr Ellis has given a summary of this chapter in the *Bulletin of the Amer Geog. Soc.*, 1886, No. 2, pp. 127-136. — Ed.]

<sup>2</sup> [See Vol. II — Ed.]





TABULA NAUTICA, 1612 \*

share in the real estate left by Adam. Then the Henrys and the Charleses of England announced themselves also as heirs. These rival sovereigns all wore the complimentary title of "Christian princes." As such they could take rightful possession of all heathendom, — of territory or of



people The sighting of a space of ocean shore by their respective navigators gave a title to the utmost reaches of land bounding upon it. The gifts bestowed were of princely largeness Of course the boundaries of

\* [NOTE. — The opposite map is from the *Zwölftte Schiffahrt* of the *Hulsius Sammlung* (Oppenheim, 1614), being Hessel Gerritsz's *Kurtze Beschreibung der Newen Schiffahrt gegen Nord-osten über die Americanische inseln, etc.* in *Hochdeutscher Sprach beschrieben durch M. Gothardam Arthusen.*

The above cut is a fac-simile of a map in *Drage's Account of a Voyage* (London, 1849), vol. ii. — Ed.]

these vast donations of territory, on the side where they were measurable, generally overlapped each other, and on the other side they ran off into shadows. When it is considered that these gifts of expanded territory not only transferred all their material contents and resources, but also included the sovereignty and mastership over their human inhabitants, we can somewhat appreciate the lavish liberality of those who gave away what did not belong to them, and recognize the vagueness in the terms of the gifts, which would inevitably bring about rivalry and conflicts attending claims to possession.



S. Freeman sculp.

PRINCE RUPERT\*

S. Freeman sculp.

King Charles II of England was one of the most bountiful of these lavish donors. But with a single notable exception, in favor of William Penn, who received a province in discharge of a crown debt due to his father, the king's generosity was exercised exclusively towards members of his own family. He gave to his brother, the Duke of York, the rich expanses from Pemaquid to the St Croix, and from the Connecticut to the Delaware. Another of his gifts furnishes the fruitful and engaging theme — for history, if not in the present treatment of it — of this chapter. To

\* [Reproduced from S. Freeman's engraving of Sir Peter Lely's picture, as given in Elliot Warburton's *Memoirs of Prince Rupert* (London, 1849) — Ed.]

his cousin, Prince Rupert — covering with his name a few associates, the king gave over the icy confines and the rich interiors of what from that time onward has been known as "Prince Rupert's Land." Under a charter dated May 2, 1670, by his own "especial grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion," without advice or confirmation by council or Parliament, Charles gave "to his beloved cousin, Prince Rupert," the Duke of Albemarle, the Earl of Craven, Lord Arlington, Lord Ashley, several baronets, knights and citizens — less than twenty named in all — the territory which was henceforward to be the property of the Hudson Bay Company.

Passing notice may here be taken of the high rank as nobles and gentlemen of those associated with a prince of the royal blood in this mercantile company. This aristocratic character of the members, with its power and privileges, was perpetuated through the succession of the company in the admission of partners and the transfer of shares. The fact is recognized here, at the start, as doubtless having a vast influence subsequently, as we shall see, in protecting and sheltering the company, in enabling it to conceal its secrets and to parry the vigorous assaults made upon its monopoly and management in after years.

The motive assigned for the royal gift was the plea that the corporators "have at their own great cost and charges undertaken an expedition for Hudson's Bay, for the discovery of a new passage into the South Sea, and for the finding some trade for furs, minerals, and other considerable commodities, and by such, their undertaking, have already made such discoveries as do encourage them to proceed further in pursuance of their said design, by means whereof there may probably arise very great advantage to us and our kingdom." It does not, however, appear what were "the discoveries already made" by these corporators or their agents, which furnished a reason for the generous grant.

The charter assured to the company "the sole trade and commerce of all those seas, straits, bays, rivers, lakes, creeks, and sounds lying within the entrance of Hudson's Straits, with all the lands, countries, and territories upon the coasts and confines" of the above seas, etc. It was stipulated that the territory thus granted should include only such as was not then "possessed by the subjects of any other christian prince or state." The parties named and such others as they shall admit to their society are incorporated as "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay," with a seal, etc. They are to choose a committee of seven of their number, any three of whom, with the governor or deputy-governor, may have the direction, management, and handling of all voyages, ships, merchandise, etc. Prince Rupert was to be the first governor; the first seven were named for the committee; a general court was to be held in November of each year, to choose officers and the committee, who were to be removable for reasons. The territory was to be reputed as a British colony, and to be called "Rupert's Land." All fisheries, mines,

traffic and trade of every kind, were assured to the company, which was to pay annually as a royalty "two elks and two black beavers." The members of the company were absolute proprietors and lords. It was empowered to make laws and ordinances, to impose penalties and punishments. No English subject was to visit, frequent, or haunt, or adventure, or trade in the territory without leave in writing under the company's seal, under penalty of forfeiture of all goods, of punishment, and of being seized and sent to England. Nor could the king grant any such privilege without leave of the company. Liberty is given to admit servants and factors into the company. Votes are to be according to stock. All the territory and its occupants are to be under the jurisdiction of the company, which shall either send all offenders to England or judge them according to its laws. The company may employ commanders and an armed force, and may erect castles, forts, garrisons, plantations, and towns. Such were the terms, rights, privileges, and immunities bestowed by royal grant and a piece of parchment. Two elks and two black beavers rendered annually to royalty, were the consideration for this lavish gift of territory, jurisdiction, and monopoly.

And what did King Charles know of the regions which he thus bestowed, to say nothing of his right of bestowal? The compass and value of the gift were then as vaguely apprehended as the terms and assurance of it were positive and comprehensive. The flow of water in straits, bays, lakes, rivers, and streams was made to decide the reachings of unbounded spaces of land. Hudson's Bay extends from longitude  $78^{\circ}$  to  $95^{\circ}$  west, and from latitude  $52^{\circ}$  to  $68^{\circ}$  north. Its area is nearly 300,000 square miles, its length from north to south 1,000 miles, its breadth 800 miles. Of the land surface, whose various waters and drippings find their way into the bay, we hardly even now know the exact measurements, though a part of our national boundary line assumes such measurements.<sup>1</sup>

Before proceeding farther with the administration of the company under the patent, it may be well here, by anticipation, to fix attention upon some of the terms of the charter which furnished the grounds of the long-continued and embittered opposition to the company, and which were urged from time to time for two hundred years before the Colonial Office and in Parliament, till the monopoly rights of the company were extinguished by arbitration and purchase. These grounds of complaint will be more fully noted further on. They are here presented summarily in connection with what has been copied from the charter, and are as follows: 1. That the charter was granted by royal prerogative without ratification. 2. That it was illegal for the Crown to grant a monopoly of trade to a favored company of subjects. 3. That the obligations imposed by the professed objects

<sup>1</sup> The limit of the grant by Charles II, as the company claimed, is given by dotted lines on the map, in the *parliamentary Accounts and Papers for 1883*, p. 6, on maps of the bounds of this territory.

(1850), xxxviii. Cf. Douglas Brymner's *Report* There is a noticeable map of Hudson's Bay and the surrounding country in Sanson's *Introduction à la Géographie* (Amsterdam, 1696).

of the company, to search for a passage to the South Sea, and also to explore for mineral wealth, had been wholly neglected by the company, which sternly discountenanced and withstood all such enterprises when prompted by others. 4. That a part, at least, of the territories claimed by the company was really exempted from the grant made to it which recognized a possible possession by the subjects of some other "Christian prince." For at least a portion of the region had been patented in 1598, by Henry IV. of France, to the Sieur de la Roche.<sup>1</sup> It was on the ground of this claim, antedating Prince Rupert's charter, that in 1684 the Chevalier de Troyes had taken and destroyed the posts of the company on Hudson and James bays, on the plea that the territory belonged to his sovereign.

In the long and sharp contest which the opponents of the company made to its monopoly and its administration, it was also complained that the company had been utterly neglectful of its duty in having made no efforts to humanize, civilize, and advance religion and education among the native Indians. It was hastily and erroneously assumed that the charter had imposed this duty upon the company, while in fact no reference whatever is made to it in that instrument. It was abundantly proved, however, that the company had made no efforts of that character such as might have been reasonably expected of Christian people drawing enormous wealth from savages, who, on the contrary, had greatly deteriorated under the company. Most effective and pointed were the charges against it, that it had so greedily devoted itself to the traffic in furs as to keep the whole country in its wilderness condition as a preserve for peltry, making the natives wholly dependent upon the traffic with the company for their subsistence. This consuming interest made the company jealous of any intrusion upon its domains, and all inquiry into its management, while it resolutely resisted every attempt at exploration, civilized settlement, and even agriculture.

The connection of Prince Rupert with this vast enterprise was a very natural one. He was known to be a most earnest and generous patron of all promising adventures. There is evidence that a master mariner from Boston, in New England, had been concerned with a M. Groselliers,<sup>2</sup> from Canada, in making a settlement at Port Nelson, at the mouth of the river, where a little stone fortress was erected by this captain, Zachary Gillam, and called Fort Charles. Rupert had given his countenance to this enterprise in connection with the work of discovery, and the "Nonsuch," one of the king's ships, was obtained for the venture.<sup>3</sup>

We are to trace for the full period of two centuries the fortunes, the mer-

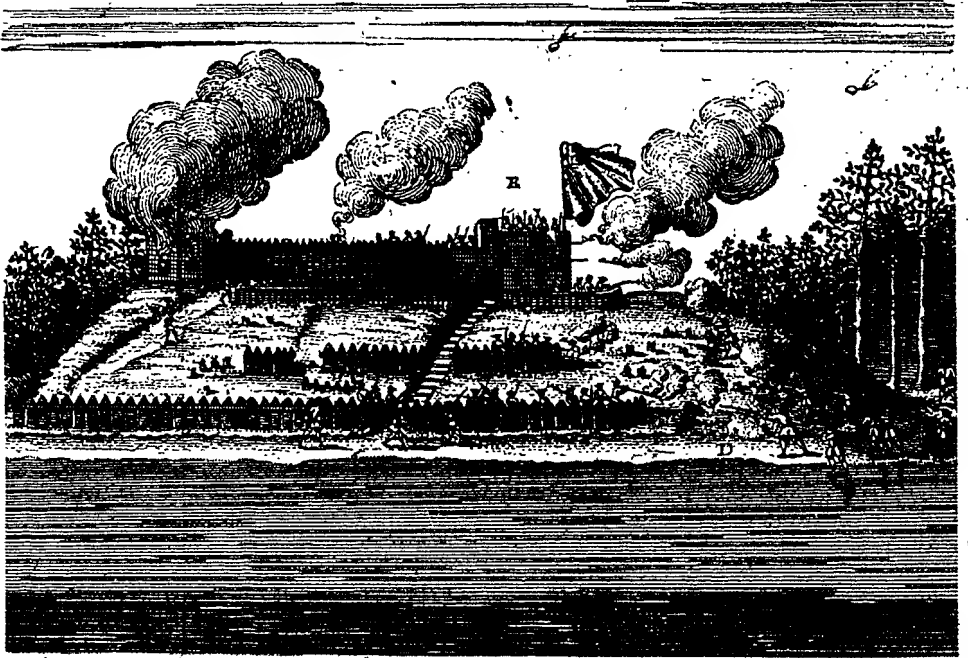
<sup>1</sup> [See Vol. IV. 56, 61, 136. — ED.]

<sup>2</sup> The name is variously spelled, as Grosseliez, Des Grozeliers, De Grossilliers, De Groselie, etc.

<sup>3</sup> A contemporary reference is made to this affair in a letter from Oldenburgh, the first secretary of the Royal Society, to Robert Boyle, Ellis's *Hudson's Bay*, p. 75. [See also Vol. IV. p. 172, and the *Hutchinson Papers*, iii. 57, 59, 89, 97, 103, 111. — ED.] As Hudson's and Sir Jo-

seph Button's journals are not extant [see Vol. III. p. 93. — ED.], the first trustworthy account which we have of any vessel wintering in the bay is that of Captain James, in Charlton Island, in 1632. [See Vol. III. p. 96, for James's map. — ED.] The next is that of Capt. Gillam, in the "Nonsuch," in 1668, though Jean Bourbon is reputed to have trafficked there in 1656.

cantile operations, and the disputed rights and policy of this chartered company on the field of its activity and in the councils of government. One might naturally pause upon the almost grotesque disparity of proportions between the vast spaces of territory over which the privileges of the company extended and the smallness of its own representation. But another and a much more striking suggestion presents itself, which will be before us through the whole historical review of our subject. The territory which finally came under the jurisdiction of the company embraced substantially half of the continent of North America. During the period



FORT NELSON.\*

to be reviewed, we have set before us a contrast of events, uses, and experiences as happening upon the two respective halves of this continent, — that which is under the jurisdiction of the United States and that under the British crown, — a contrast which in sum and detail may well astound us. On the lower side of the boundary line the whole scene has been one of advance in enterprise, a steady, vigorous pushing forwards over mountains, plains, and valleys, of tilled fields, of thriving settlements, of sumptuous cities, and of millions of toiling, prosperous peoples. On the upper side a narrow, jealous, obstructive policy had shut out all intrusion upon a wilderness by any but stealthy trappers and the desolate wintering agents of a monopoly in the peltry traffic.

It may well be said that in addition to all the questions which might be

\* [Part of an engraving in La Potherie's *Hist. de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (1722), i. p. 105. The "Camp de Bourbon" was along the shore to the right. The bomb-shells seen in the air are from its mortars. — Ed.]

raised as to the validity of the charter and the administration of affairs under it, there was a most serious and perplexing vagueness and uncertainty as to the limits of the territory which it covered. There were at the time French half-breed voyageurs who had some faint conception of the interior of the northern parts of our continent, and of the general disposition of land and water in it. But when the king made over to this company all the inland reaches whose waters drained into Hudson's Bay, no Englishman had the slightest knowledge of the interior of the territory. It certainly proved to be, under its claimants, a wellnigh unbounded expanse. We shall see further on that in the sharpest and most bitter contest which the company had to meet, it asked successfully of Parliament a grant, limited for a term of years, and renewed for another term, of an exclusive right of trade in and over the so-called "Indian Territory." This included the whole unknown and unexplored region of the Northwest; and when, in 1848, the company secured a right to plant a colony in Vancouver's Island, its privileges and range extended over a space of territory one third larger than the whole area of Europe, embracing more than four millions of square miles, and hiding in its unknown depths, as afterwards revealed, fifty wild native tribes of men, who, as before intimated, substantially were made over for mastery with the territory, because the company always stoutly maintained that the Indians should trade only with its agents.

The charter of the company, with such validity as it had, retained its vitality for full two centuries, and became the sanction of a giant monopoly, dividing enormous profits to a favored few who did their utmost to shroud their own affairs in secrecy, and to ward off all attempts at interference with its claimed rights and privileges. We shall have to note, however, a continued series of assaults upon the validity of the charter, of grievous complaints against proceedings and practices under it, and of efforts to ensure its abrogation. Each of these grievances and efforts was pressed with increased zeal and determination. We shall have also to recognize the agencies and influences which kept the charter in force. It should be mentioned here that in one of the warmly contested issues of this sort, in 1847, there first appeared in print a document, of which it is said, very strangely, that its "existence had been not even suspected by the British government," but yet it was found in the Rolls of Chancery.<sup>1</sup> This document was a confirmation by Act of Parliament, given to the charter in 1690, under William and Mary. The ground on which this Act was applied for by the company was, that it needed the authority of Parliament beyond that of the Royal Grant, in order to ensure the full benefit of the latter, and to enable the company to keep off French and English interlopers. By seeking and accepting this act, the company certainly indicated a misgiving as to the fullness and assurance of its supposed rights under the charter. Parliament strictly limited its confirmation to a

<sup>1</sup> *British Documents, Accounts and Papers*, vol. xxxv. p. 95.



period of seven years. The company shrewdly refrained from seeking a renewal of it.

Let us pause for a moment to bring before us those then wild regions. Once hid in vastness and gloom, they are now disclosing all their secrets, so that we can read them as they were. The whole territory, whatever its length or breadth, had but one worth or use for the small mercantile company, whose office then, as now, was in Fenchurch Street, London. It was simply as a preserve for fur-bearing animals, and for red Indians who might hunt and trap them. Marvellously well adapted and occupied was the region for that purpose. Its conditions and surroundings could not have been better disposed for just such a use as was made of it; or rather we should say, that under the selfish aims and the mean policy pursued in it no region could have been more rich and facile for the ends to which it was put. We must first view it through the means and methods for entering, penetrating, traversing, and carrying into and bringing out from it supplies and products.

We may imagine that we have before us for study and thought two very large skeleton maps of our northern continent, giving simply the undivided stretches of territory, without boundaries or names. Let one of those maps represent the surface of the country just as it was waiting to be entered upon by Europeans. It will present the general features of the land, plain, hilly, or mountainous, barren or fertile; and it will show the deposits and courses of water in lakes, in confluent or single streams, of every breadth, of river or rill, their sources and outlets. Let the other map represent the same territory with the same delineation, but with the added feature of the lines of our railways at the present stage of the system, supplemented by the projected and probable lines of trunk and branch required and expected to perfect it.

Looking upon those two maps and comparing them in sum and detail, the observer will hardly fail to be impressed with the thought that the country, with its facilities for transit, intercourse, and commerce, was as well adapted by nature for the inhabitants first occupying and using it for their necessities and profit as it is at this day by art, for quite another class of occupants, for quite other uses and advantages. The highways which nature had opened in the wilderness, in the diversified and abounding watercourses, made a perfect reticulation of artery and vein over the whole territory; and there were junctions and branches for divergence in every direction. True, there were obstructions to a continuous passage by these watercourses in heights of land, divides, cataracts, cascades, and rapids. But the Indian could lift his canoe and its burden and carry it over land from water to water, when he could not venture to run the ascending or descending rush; or he could trail his vessel while he walked on the shore. These obstructions or carrying-places of the Indians answer to and were no more annoying to him than are the high grades of our railroads to us. We can see now, as we look upon the land and water map, that any one com-

ing in a ship from Europe, by changing his freight to boats of different size, and occasionally to canoes, may pass through the continent to the Pacific, in spite of breaks or obstructions varying from the length of a few yards to the extreme of ten or twelve miles. The means and facilities for this water transit were especially available and convenient through the regions which were turned to the profit of the Hudson's Bay Company, and it could find junctions and partings of streams and radiations of head-water for dispersing or gathering its supplies or returns. The course from the sea by the St. Lawrence to Lake Superior offered an alternative of routes, either by the Ottawa with its cascades, or by the chain of lakes with its cataract at Niagara and the Falls of St. Mary between Superior and Huron. The Hudson's Bay Company found by experience that, though it kept a firmer hold on its charter, it worked to great disadvantage in conducting its business from the icy coast. Its rivals in the fierce contests for the Indian trade, as we shall have to notice, did better in their choice of routes. From the company's post, York Factory, at the mouth of Hay's River, on the Bay, up the rivers and through Lake Winnipeg to Red River, the distance was about 800 miles, with thirty-six carrying-places. Winnipeg River is full of rapids, as it passes through a rocky country. There are twenty-seven portages in its course, for it descends 360 feet in 160 miles. The rival companies took as their point of departure Fort William, on the northern end of Lake Superior, the route to the Red River being 772 miles, and to Lake Winnipeg 500 miles, through much good territory and hard navigation by canoes, with sixty-six portages varying from a hundred yards to three and a half miles.<sup>1</sup> Crossing Lake Winnipeg, and entering the mouth of the Saskatchewan, with but one formidable rapid in the falls near Cumberland House, one may float on its waters for 1,400 miles up to its source in the Rocky Mountains. There at a few yards' distance he will find a source of the Columbia starting for its discharge into the Pacific. The Columbia and its tributaries drain a region of 400,000 square miles, and the river is navigable, with interruptions, for 725 miles. Its sources on this side are within 450 miles of the deep waters of the Missouri; and lakes, rivers, and brooks will bear canoes through the whole space between. The swamps and marshes and sedges created by all these waters were the chosen and populous homes of the beaver, which had colonized and hibernated here for ages. Unluckily for them, their skins, as most highly prized till the invention of silk hats, set the standard for the money value of all the peltries. Otters, martens, musk-rats, and all the other species of amphibious creatures, with countless herds of buffaloes, moose, bears, deer, foxes, wolves, etc., found here their natural home. As naturally, too, they had multiplied, the aborigines killing only enough of them for their clothing and subsistence till the greed of traffic threatened their

<sup>1</sup> From Lake Superior to the height of land 830 feet. The descent to Lake Winnipeg is 853 feet. The further descent from the lake to York those which flow into Hudson's Bay, the rise is Fort on the bay is 830 feet.

complete extirpation. Fish and wild fowl abounded in the wilderness. The treeless plain regions were coursed at intervals by bottom lands and streams whose banks were well wooded, and the primeval forests kept their awful solitudes. The aborigines, adapting themselves to circumstances, found the supply of all their wants in simply skimming the surface of their domains.

Such was the region, in its furnishings and surroundings, which was put to the service of the chartered Hudson's Bay Company, to be used for much or little, as power and will, opportunity and circumstances, might decide. The legality, wisdom, and rectitude of the company as a business corporation were questioned through its whole extended existence. It would perhaps be difficult to pronounce on the question whether or not it fairly and effectively filled its place of enterprise and influence in the series of efforts and struggles which have opened and enriched the new world. Within its own aims and methods the company certainly must be said to have marvellously prospered. Starting with a capital of £10,500, it has been carefully estimated that it has carried from this country furs which have sold for one hundred and twenty million dollars. But of this more by and by.

Immediately on the receipt of the charter the company began its mercantile operations with energy and zeal. Though setting aside for the present the question of the validity of its charter, reasonable strictures have found forcible expression as to the harm which it suffered from its own narrow and selfish policy. Reference has already been made to the fact that the French traders from Canada, entering the country of furs at another point than the Bay, had begun to find vast profit over the whole northwest territory. The company always aimed to have it appear that the straits and Bay offered the best practicable entrance to the fur region, and discouraged the route through Lake Superior. So the company planted its earliest posts on the margins of the icy coast, at the mouths of the principal rivers. The situation from the first precluded all labors and much profits by tillage of the soil, though in peculiarly favorable seasons a few vegetables were cultivated. With seven or eight months of freezing weather, which bound the earth in frost very deep below the surface, the extreme heat of the brief summer availed only to relax the surface, and this became soft, wet, and marshy. Below three feet of thaw there were fifteen feet of frost. The thermometer in the course of the year had a free range of a hundred and fifty degrees, rising a hundred degrees above and sinking fifty degrees below the freezing point. Even had France been willing to admit the right of the English monarch to confer the chartered territory on his subjects, the relations existing between the two powers would not have allowed a transit to the company through Canada. We shall find that all the subsequent rivalries and contests between the opposing fur companies were prompted and embittered by the conditions under which the Bay Company began its operations and continued them for more

than half a century, without penetrating any distance into the country by lakes and rivers. The French penetrated the interior to open trade with the savages; the English waited to have the peltries brought to them at their outer posts.

In the first year of the charter the company sent Charles Bayly, as its first resident agent, to set up a factory at Rupert's River. The French had already wintered in the Bay, and the first of the series of collisions, soon to be referred to, occurred. In 1685 there were five posts of the company. The next year De Troyes went by land from Canada and destroyed three of them, and so the posts changed hands till the Treaty of Utrecht. A single English ship annually sufficed for a time to conduct the business. There were never more than two in a year besides a small sloop retained in the Bay. The mariners soon, so to speak, learned to know their way to the inhospitable port, and no other vessels than those belonging to the company were allowed access. The intention was that the ships should arrive within the straits between the 10th and 15th of August, and, after changing cargo, should go out between September 15th and 20th. But the tight or the floating masses of ice did not dispose their movements by the almanac, and patience and seamanship were put to sore trials. Captain Herd, in his testimony before a parliamentary committee in 1857, said that in passing through the straits he had experienced all the difference, in his successive voyages, between four days and five weeks. Of the distance between London and the Bay, which he estimated to be about 3,500 miles, the way through ice was from 800 to 1,000 miles, requiring an average of three weeks to penetrate it. This sturdy seaman seems to have confined himself strictly to the deck of his vessel when in the Bay. He had no curiosity about the country or its people, and could give no information. He said he "was always very glad to get there, and very glad to leave it again." The two annual vessels endeavored to keep together on the outward passage, parting after entering the Bay, the one for York Factory, the other for Moose Factory on James' Bay, — and also to come out of the straits in company.

The organization of the company in London provided for the administration of all its local business affairs within its chartered territory. Of course it had supreme authority, and all that it delegated under it was subject in its exercise to the revision and approval of the company. The charter, as we have seen, constituted a very small body of directors, and made a very small number of these a quorum for the transaction of business. As it was soon found that much reticence about its affairs was considered necessary to guard its secrets and to secure its interests as a monopoly, it became a corporation of the closest sort. It would seem that under the sharpest parliamentary inquisition certain secrets of the company could not be drawn out. It presented only such extracts from its papers and books as it saw fit to make public. And of course its most trusted officials in the Bay were expected to be confidential and loyal in its service. For some

years the company sent a superintendent to each of its posts. The method and details of local administration were developed and adjusted by circumstances and the expansion of the business of the company, and appear soon to have resulted in an admirably managed system. A local resident governor was appointed to supervise all the business arrangements in the Bay,



*G. Simpson*

SIR GEORGE SIMPSON.\*

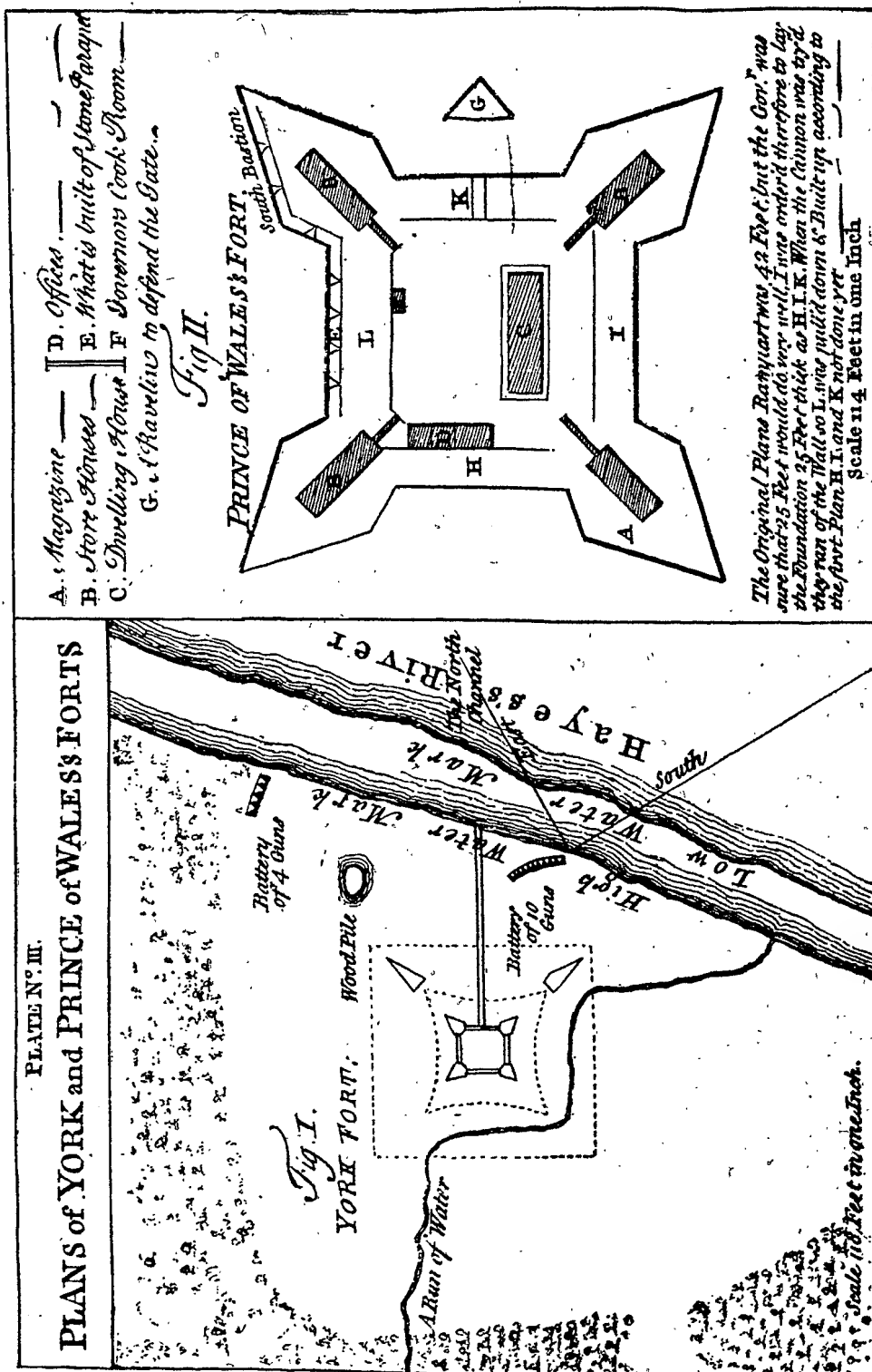
and to dispose all offices and trusts, under the approval of the company. It soon naturally became customary to set in this high responsibility, according to the rule for the promotion of its servants, one who had risen from the ranks, and had shown capacity and fidelity. This local governor was to preside at a council which was to be held annually, and oftener if there were occasion, for the purpose of directing all the arrangements of the business down to the most minute details regarding the assignment of posts to all subordinates and servants, the planning of expeditions, the disposal of goods, and every outlay. The territory was a vast one for any

\* After a cut in Bryce's *Manitoba*, p. 291.

systematic oversight and for the distribution at long distances of those intrusted with property and business. The company came, under the stress of the assaults made upon it, to assuming and asserting, as if by authority of its charter, that it controlled all the territory whose waters *drained* into the Bay. This, however, was a constructive interpretation, not warranted by the letter of the instrument. But, as so construed, the region extended from the Bay easterly on the coast about 200 miles, on the south towards Canada 300, and on the west to the Rocky Mountains nearly 1,500 miles. And when, as we shall notice, the company, at the period of its greatest energy, had procured a government license for "exclusive trade" over what was called the "Indian Territory," namely, the whole northwest of America, whose waters drained into the Arctic Ocean and the Pacific, the administration of affairs became a task for the highest executive ability. Deferring for the present a statement of the circumstances under which he came into the office, it may be noted here that in 1821 Sir George Simpson was the first person chosen to the great trust of representing the company in America, in its whole domain and in all its business. He, as "Governor of Rupert's Land," thus absorbed all the offices and responsibilities which had heretofore been distributed among petty heads at the various posts. After holding the office for nearly forty years, covering some of the most agitating controversies of the company, his failing health required him to leave the country. He died in England in 1860, while still in office.

The council over which the general local governor presided was composed of the highest in rank of the resident business officials of the company, called the "chief factors." If there were not enough of these present for full discussion and disposal of affairs, some of the "chief traders," the second grade of officials, might take part in the council. It would seem, however, that the power of the governor was autocratical and supreme, for his final judgment or decision could not be overruled. When questioned on this point before a parliamentary committee, in 1857, Governor Simpson said that there had never been an occasion in which a direct issue had been raised between him and the council. When fully organized, the resident corps of the company was: 16 chief factors; 29 chief traders; 5 surgeons; 87 apprentice clerks; 67 masters at posts; 1,200 permanent servants, Indians and others, and about 500 voyageurs; 150 officers and crews of vessels: thus employing about 3,000 men. The Indian population of Rupert's Land, over whom the company was supposed to exercise some influence, was estimated in 1857 at 43,000; in the Indian Territory, east of the mountains, at 13,000, and west of them, 80,000.

The council, which generally met in June, had to dispose of the affairs, the transmission of supplies, the return of furs, the oversight of the accounts, the assignment of officials, of clerks, apprentices and servants, and all the minutest details of these operations in the wilderness. Though not held to any one place of meeting, the council usually assembled at Norway House, at the northern end of Lake Winnipeg. This station became the



[NOTE. — Fac-simile of a plate in Robson's *Hudson's Bay* (London, 1752). — ED.]

central or distributing depot for the whole country. Brigades, as the several travelling or boating companies were called, started from and returned to this centre, by the Saskatchewan to the Rocky Mountains, to Cumberland, to English River, Athabasca, Mackenzie's River, Swan River, Red River, and Rainy Lake. The posts were separated by distances of from fifty to three hundred miles, and the numbers that manned them were from thirty or forty down to only two. Two years' supplies of imported goods were kept in store at York, to guard against the failure of arrival of the annual ships. These goods were a most medley collection for the Indian trade, many of them bought cheaply as poor finery, or as out of fashion in England: guns, powder, shot and balls, fishing tackle, blankets, cloths, gaudy kerchiefs, axes, hatchets, awls, jews-harps, fiddle-strings, knives, kettles, looking and burning glasses, beads, trinkets, and whatever would seize the fancy of buck, squaw, and half-breed, besides articles needed by the resident Europeans.

Every parcel of imported foreign goods and every bundle of furs for exportation was done up in a package not to exceed one hundred pounds. These would be carefully disposed in the canoe or boat, and a strong man would carry two of them over the portage, held by a strap passing either over his forehead or across his chest. The tedium of the way would be relieved by rough jest and song. In crossing a lake in boats or the larger canoes, the wind favoring, a sail would be put to service, and give a grateful change to the voyageurs, who, however, if necessary, could ply their paddles through the whole way, with the allowed intermission for a smoke. The camp at night gave them their substantial meal. Starting before daylight, they generally travelled for two hours, and then rested for breakfast, not having any midday repast. When the ways were frozen and covered with snow, a simple sled, without runners, was substituted. This was drawn, according to its burden, by a train of from two to eight dogs, belled, beaded, and ribboned after a gay fashion, in single file, kept to their task by the whip and imprecations of the driver. When the snow was heavy, soft, and drifted, progress was toilsome; but when its surface was glazed by ice the motion was easy and rapid. One who had become an adept in travelling with the rachine, or snow-shoe, did not suffer as did a novice in its use from the galling of its bands for toes and ankle. The dogs sometimes had to have their feet protected by leather boots from excoriation by rough, broken ice. Thirty miles was considered a good day's travel, under ordinary circumstances, but fifty or sixty miles were often accomplished. The instinct of a native or a half-breed might always be trusted to steer a straight course on the water, or to follow the right line on foot; but the risk for an unskilled European always was that, if left to himself, or lost on the plain or in the forest, he would travel in a circle, and come out where he started on his round. Certain way-marks and guides were well known by those who had once passed by the blindest way. If the canoe sprung a leak or was pierced by a rock, it was but a



simple process to draw ashore and gather some bark and resinous material for repairs.

The posts of the company, being planted at the confluence or the parting of streams, offered opportunities in long routes of travel for occasional intercourse and hospitality. In camping at night, whether on the soft earth, on a hard rock, or amid the deep snow, habit fixed the routine of every makeshift and of every preparation for comfort of which the circumstances admitted, though these wilderness travellers soon came to keep their views of comfort within very restricted limits. Proximity to running water, and to dried fallen wood or drift-wood, was desirable, because the fire prepared for the night was heaped in size and quantity as if a view was had to warming all out-doors. Where bushes could be found, they were planted like a fence or shield round a circle, leaving an open space for the fire. Sometimes this fence was necessarily made of the snow scooped up by the snow-shoes from the spot which was to form the couches. Pine boughs, when they could be had, served for bedding. The kettle was put upon the fire, and its miscellaneous contents distributed in tin cups or platters. Often a travelling party might rely wholly or largely upon the game—animal, bird, or fish—to be found on the route. The staple food at the posts and in travel was the pemmican, of which the company gathered in its storehouses thousands of bags. Most usually prepared from the buffalo, pemmican might be made also of moose meat, deer, or mountain sheep. The two yearly hunts of the natives were busily turned to the account of the manufacture of pemmican. When hundreds or even thousands of the animals had been dropped on the plains, the buck-hunter had done his work. The squaws came to do their share. The carcasses were skinned, that the hides might pass through the processes of drying, tanning, and softening for very many uses. The meat was torn into strips, dried by the sun or a fire, pounded into crumbs, and then packed in a close bag made of the hide. A quantity of hot fat, in proportion of about four to five of the lean, was turned into the bag, stirred into a mixture, and then carefully closed from the air. Sometimes berries or condiments, if to be had, were combined with the compound. This food was the main-stay, and was transported at wide distances for men and dogs. It was very satisfying, and hunger qualified its repulsiveness till its taste and even relish was acquired.<sup>1</sup> One buffalo carcass would make at least a hundred-pound bag of pemmican. As prepared by the uncleanly squaws, the hair of the animal mingled in the compound, and was a needless addition to the revulsion of a fastidious appetite.

One of the most natural and yet most difficult and unavailing of the efforts of the whites in their intercourse with the natives was to overcome their habits of wanton wastefulness and utter improvidence. Their life

<sup>1</sup> The article which, under the name "pemmican," is prepared in England for arctic expeditions is a richer and more palatable condiment,

being compounded of the best of beef with fruits and sugar.

was spent between alternations of gluttonous gorgings of food, when it was abundant, and protracted sufferings by various stages and the full reality of starvation. The natives held firmly to a belief that the more game they slaughtered the more rapidly would the animals multiply; so in a rich hunt they would leave the plains strewn with carcasses far exceeding their needs or means of transportation, thus providing a harvest for packs of wolves, which were always well repaid as gleaners. True, the wandering habits of the natives did not favor household economies, and the utmost of their providence was shown either in packing surplus provisions upon stagings, or depositing them in *caches* under rocks and logs; in either case exercising all their wits to circumvent the arts of wolves, or that most cunning of prowlers, the wolverine, or glutton. The stoicism of the Indian was exhibited in his uncomplaining endurance of hunger in the frequent failure not only of what we call food, but in the lack of those pitiful substitutes for it, the boiling of his own robes or moccasins, or the sered and glutinous moss stripped from the rocks. The narrations of the servants of the Bay Company report many instances of the last dread emergencies in which, by the casting of the lot or a desperate and treacherous stratagem, one or more survivors, the husband or the father, relieved his own pangs by cannibalism. In the vocabulary of the natives there was a word — a dreaded one for such as rightfully bore it — designating one who had eaten of human flesh. There were cases in which white men at lonely posts, or in the desolation of winter travel on plain or in forest, came to the direst extremities. The food of which mariners grow most weary on long voyages was often most grateful to men in the wilderness. Happy were they who could add a relish to their dry repasts of game or fish from the stores of the pork-barrels in the warehouses of the Bay.

The rations of food dealt out to the voyageurs and to those at the posts varied according to the nature of the supplies. On the shores of the Bay a wild goose was a day's ration, — so were ten pounds of buffalo meat; at Athabasca, eight pounds of moose meat; on English River, three large white-fish; higher to the north, reindeer; west of the Rocky Mountains, eight rabbits or a salmon. One of the most niggard regions for food was on the route between Lake Superior and Winnipeg. There fish were scarce, and though rabbits were sometimes innumerable, they were most innutritive. The most faithful companions of these wilderness travellers, their own horses and dogs, were necessarily put to the uses of the kettle when there was no alternative resource. No article figures on the invoices of the Hudson's Bay vessels in greater proportionate quantities to other stores than Schouschong tea. The Indians became passionately fond of this gentle stimulant, and shared with the whites the freest use of the beverage so long as any of it was left in the outfit. After passing a threatened peril, or accomplishing some extreme effort of daring or endurance, a full solace was always found in starting a blaze, putting on the kettle, and drinking the effusion almost at the boiling point. The extended hand of

some red stroller, met on the way, would accompany the begging words, "The," "Suga." The company imported vast quantities of tobacco in plug and twists. It was available alike for barter and for presents. The natives used some indigenous herbs, roots, and barks to supplement a limited portion of tobacco, or as an unwelcome substitute for it. There were large reaches of travel over the plains, and woodless regions which yielded no fuel. Generally its place could be supplied by "buffalo chips," which were abundantly scattered, and which gave forth, in burning, a not unpleasant aroma.

In many pages of many volumes, written by servants of the company, we have full details of the experience of the "winterers" in solitary posts. To one who had had no training by degrees of adventure or responsibilities that dismal isolation must have had some appalling features, with scarce any relieving or compensating resources. Yet we find that all the exactions of the situation were met patiently and faithfully by vigorous young men; that habit made them at first so tolerable, and then even so attractive, that, as men grew old in the service, they found their solace in such seclusion, with the occasional interruptions which came upon it in the course of a year. Once, at least, in each year, a mail was sent by the company to all its posts. In a through line of far travel, canoe men or dog teams would be the carriers, and on side branches a voyageur or a native runner would be the welcome messenger. The company's office in London was the receiving depot of all letters, papers, or parcels passing between its servants and their friends at home. Much systematic method was used in this service. The clerks and apprentices took care to be well supplied at their posts with materials for correspondence. Some of them, blessed with several correspondents, from each of whom they expected annual letters, naively tell us that, having no news and very little of incident, though with abundance of sentiment for filling a letter, their habit was to take pains in writing a very good one, and then to make as many copies of it as were needful. The few books which could be carried to the outposts were interchanged. A file of the "London Times," a year old when it fell into the possession of a lucky exile, would serve day by day, in course, for a whole year's perusal.

In the chief or central posts of the company, where much routine work was to be done in accounts, or in the unpacking, repacking, and distribution of goods, there were men enough for companionship. Here a so-called "Bachelor's Hall" was turned to good service for preparing and partaking food, and for after-festivities and jollities where such were possible; and they rarely failed. The fiddle and the jews-harp, the dance, with various games, the welcoming of a wayfarer with news from the outside world, or a change in the corps of the clerks, as announced by the mandatory advices of the council, came in to break a dull monotony. When the cold was so intense that a nose would freeze if an eye on either side of it looked out-of-doors, and when the inner walls of the "Hall" were glazed by the con-

gelations from steam and breath, an iron stove, heated red by logs of four-foot wood, made a cheering centre, enhanced by the sound of forest trees exploding like artillery from the nip of winter. When the weather permitted, a party would go forth of the palisading to bore holes through lake or river ice, five or six feet in thickness, in order to make a grateful alteration from the frozen fish stored in their pantries, by spearing or hooking some of their living brethren. The opening spring brought with it fine sport among varieties of wild fowl. The swamps and thickets sent forth in clouds a venomous breed of mosquitoes, which inflicted fierce tortures upon humanity, and not infrequently stung to death the largest animals, wild and domestic.

The busy and the gala times would come together at the larger gathering and distributing posts, on the arrival or departure of brigades of voyageurs, or of bands of the natives, with the spoils of the hunt or chase. These exciting scenes occurred at least twice in each year. The summer was the season for hunting the buffalo on the plains by large companies of natives and half-breeds; the winter saw the trappers for precious furs scattered in solitary lodges at wide distances in the forest and by the beaver marshes. Some two or three forerunners, just while they were waited for, would present themselves with heraldic formalities at the post, announcing the coming of a well-laden party, and discharging some diplomatic duties by obtaining information as to the prospects of a good trade.

In nearly every volume written by resident servants of the company, the free use of ardent spirits, with scenes of wild riot, debauchery, and even bloodshed, make often a hideous episode in the description of what took place on these occasions. Here, then, may be a fitting place for trying to define, if possible, the policy and responsibility of the Bay Company as to the introduction and distribution of intoxicating liquors in their territories. Of course, the opponents and rivals of the company brought against them the most unsparing charges and invectives for their culpability and inhumanity in this matter. And whenever the affairs of the company were brought under official investigation the inquisition was very sharp and searching, if possible to reveal the real facts in the case. But any one who patiently and candidly follows out those inquisitions, with the testimony disclosed, will at least be puzzled in attempting to draw a clear conclusion about it. At times the witnesses on the side of the company, when challenged, appeared to admit that though the company, at an early period of its operations and in ignorance, had imported and distributed large quantities of spirits, yet that at the time of the present questioning they had imposed rigid restrictions upon the export, and stated the small number of puncheons or gallons which had gone in the last vessels. Again it was pleaded that spirits were never used by them in barter for the Indians' furs, but were bestowed after the way of presents. And once more, the excuse was offered that the company, after having once prohibited and prevented the distribution of spirits, had been compelled to allow them again, at least

with some parties of natives, because their rivals, French and Americans, used them unstintedly to advance their trade. But, on the whole, the facts and the testimony bear hard against the company, even from those best informed in its affairs. A poor kind of spirit was manufactured in England for the company. Before it reached the natives it was diluted from a single part in ten up to even seven parts of water, for use among different tribes according to ascertained facts as to the relative susceptibility of their brains. The Indians were quick to learn about this reduction of the stimulating quality, and the term "fire-water" indicated their test by flame.

The heralds who announced the proximity of the fur-laden natives were dismissed with a present and the much-coveted dram. And then would soon appear on the scene a motley rush and grouping of wild crowds of Indians, all panting to meet the full reality of the fruition of the prospects which had cheered them through long months of solitary tramping. When the natives moved in companies for a visit to a post with their furs, they had to bring with them their food and all their household goods, — their lodge-poles and coverings, their pans and kettles, and their whole families. The proud buck would carry no other burden than his gun. If they had dogs, these were put to the utmost service for drawing the laden sledge, if there was snow, or by an ingenious arrangement of two long poles fastened to their collars, and trailing behind them, with a pack attached. Failing help from brutes, the squaws bore all the impedimenta, and in the same pouch on their backs the pappoose would share his nestling-place with the puppy-dog, too young to travel on his legs. The picturesque or hideous spectacle — whichever epithet may meet our imagination of it — presented itself in all the bedizenment of Indian finery, with boisterous shouts, greetings, and yells. The visitors were required to keep at a respectful distance from the precincts of the post, so a considerable time was busily spent in settling an encampment after their own taste and fashion, while, during the interval, the employees of the post were carefully attending to their own securities and arrangements for meeting all the excitements and turbulences of the occasion, and for carrying out the well-prepared methods of profitable barter or traffic. Many all too faithful narrators have described to us in vivid pictures the scenes of the wild orgies and drinking bout which preceded the serious business negotiations. As much spirituous liquor as would on the one hand be thought not excessive, and on the other not meanly stinted, was sent out to the encampment. The squaws, well knowing what would follow, gathered up from the braves all their weapons and hid them away. Then for two or three days were enacted scenes of turbulence, of maudlin folly, and of demoniac passion and bestiality, which need no detail of description beyond the word pandemonium. When exhaustion and sleep had brought back shame and the reassertion of such manhood as these humbled victims of the white man's greed might retain, the actual business began. The natives were admitted singly within the guarded precincts of the trading-room. No specie or paper currency was used. The convenient

medium of exchange was found in bundles of little sticks, held by the clerk. A beaver represented the unit of value, and the tariff of other skins rose or fell by a fixed estimate. The native would open his pack, and, after the careful examination of its contents by the clerks, he would receive an answering number of these sticks. When all the natives had singly passed through this process, another apartment was in the same manner made accessible to them, one by one. Here were displayed goods and wares in abundance,—supplies of all the articles attractive to native men and women, for uses of necessity or fancy. These, too, had their fixed prices by the tariff. The purchaser, dazed by the display, was allowed full time to make his selection, and, as his choice fell, the clerk took from him the answering value represented by the sticks which he had received for his peltries. A system of credit by advances to the natives was found by the officers of the company to work well in practice. By this system large numbers of the natives were kept in its debt, and the general testimony is that the creditors were faithful. On the general principle that a purchaser may fairly be left to accept the estimated worth of anything by its value to himself, under his own circumstances, there might be two sides to the question whether the white men cheated the natives. Axes, knives, hatchets, kettles, blankets, cloths, guns, and ammunition were articles of high use and value to an Indian, and after his intercourse with the Europeans they became necessities to him. Trinkets and gewgaws and fancy-colored stuffs also had to the squaws a worth compensatory to them for the drudgery of their hard life. Unfortunately, the wandering and reckless habits of these natives, who became all the more poor as their dependence upon the whites increased, made even articles of the highest value to be soon worthless in their possession, and they had no resources for their repair or preservation. Something will need to be said by and by of the profits drawn by the whites from this traffic, and we may see reason to approve the judgment that the advantage was, on the side of conscience, with the natives.

The trade being closed, the encampment was broken, and the party, laden with its return goods, took its way into the wilds. Then the clerks at the posts had their own well-defined task before them, to sort out the peltries which had been gathered in, and arrange them in packages for transfer by the ocean to the London warehouse. This was a process which required trained skill. Some of the very choicest skins needed to be treated with great care, as a trifling blemish would much reduce their value. The natives themselves, or rather the squaws, when they had the time to give to it, had a curious facility beyond even that of the whites in all the processes of scraping the flesh from the skin, softening, drying, and tanning it. These precious bales, for their ocean passage, needed to be guarded from heats and damps, and from gathering foul odors. But the requisite art seems to have been perfected.

Such, as selected and condensed from many thousands of pages, writ-

ten amid the scenes above described, and by narrators whose whole range of life and activity was filled by occupations of steady labor and by incidents of romance, is a representation of service in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company.

We have now to present in historical statement and review that continuous series of agitations, controversies, and discussions, with appeals to government and hearings before parliamentary committees, extending through the whole of two centuries, which brought under question the chartered rights of the Hudson's Bay Company and its administration. We may say at the start that, in view of this protracted struggle, one who follows out its stages with a fair recognition of the various and powerful agencies engaged against the monopolists will have cause to wonder at the tenacity of life in the company, the policy and skill with which it thwarted opposition, and its ingenuity in covering its most important secrets; while, through all the period of its existence, with but few interruptions of its pecuniary thrift, it yielded such magnificent profits. The truth is, the company was shielded by powerful patronage. It had friends in high places. Its rights of possession had acquired by lapse of time those prerogatives and immunities which have for Englishmen so attractive and efficient an influence in sanctioning questionable claims, if not even abuses. It was more than once admitted, under official processes concerning the charter, that while neither crown nor Parliament would in modern times confer or concede any such rights or privileges as it bestowed, yet that this wiser lesson of experience could not be carried so far back as 1670 for its application. It was evident that a strong prestige of authority ran down with the charter attaching to it from the royal and princely titles connected with the original and gracious donation. For a long period we find the names of the successive sovereigns leading the lists of the shareholders, as substitutes for the name of Prince Rupert. Not that any one of them had ever paid the price of stock, but the object evidently was to secure a royal dignity for the corporation. The covenanted annual consideration enjoined by the charter of "two elks and two black beavers" to be returned to the sovereign may have been duly rendered. It would, however, have been generously commuted by the annual douceurs of much higher value which were sure to reach the court. Doubtless many a rich marten or sable, the most precious of all the spoils of the wilderness, passed from the little creatures which had worn the skin to the shoulders of royalty. Tentative steps of inquisition as to the owners and value of the company's stock, at any given time, were baffled by pleas of unsettled accounts of profit and debt, and the assertion that some of the shares had passed by inheritance to women and children, thus involving processes of chancery.

There was much significance in the fact already stated, that so early as only twenty years after the sealing of the charter the company, under the prompting of some misgivings as to its validity, as it had only the sanction

of the crown, had sought and obtained for it a parliamentary confirmation. The draft of the act of confirmation had limited the grant to ten years. The period was reduced by the committee to seven years. A perfect silence is observable as to any measures taken by the company to secure a renewal of this sanction by extension of time or by an indefinite term. We are left to imagine an explanation of this course pursued by the company. By appealing to Parliament it had confessed a consciousness of insecurity, and it must have recognized that the termination of the limited period might bring with it some form of a crisis. We can well understand that the company, in its close councils, under the caution of some shrewd adviser, judged it safest not to invite upon itself any further official attention or scrutiny.

The occasions and incidents which through the whole two centuries of the chartered existence and administration of the company kept it under conflict of open and aggressive warfare, jealousy, rival opposition, business and mercantile antagonism, and official processes by government, may be disposed and treated under three divisions. It may be premised that all these matters of strife were more or less directly the mischievous results of the fact intimated in the opening of this chapter, namely, that that spasmodically generous monarch, Charles II, who made many other similar gifts, in the charter which he granted to Prince Rupert and his associates bestowed lavishly what did not belong to him.

1. The first and the most serious collisions of the company, involving measures of warfare, havoc, and large pecuniary losses, were encountered in consequence of its trespass upon rights claimed by France and French subjects under recognized principles of public law.

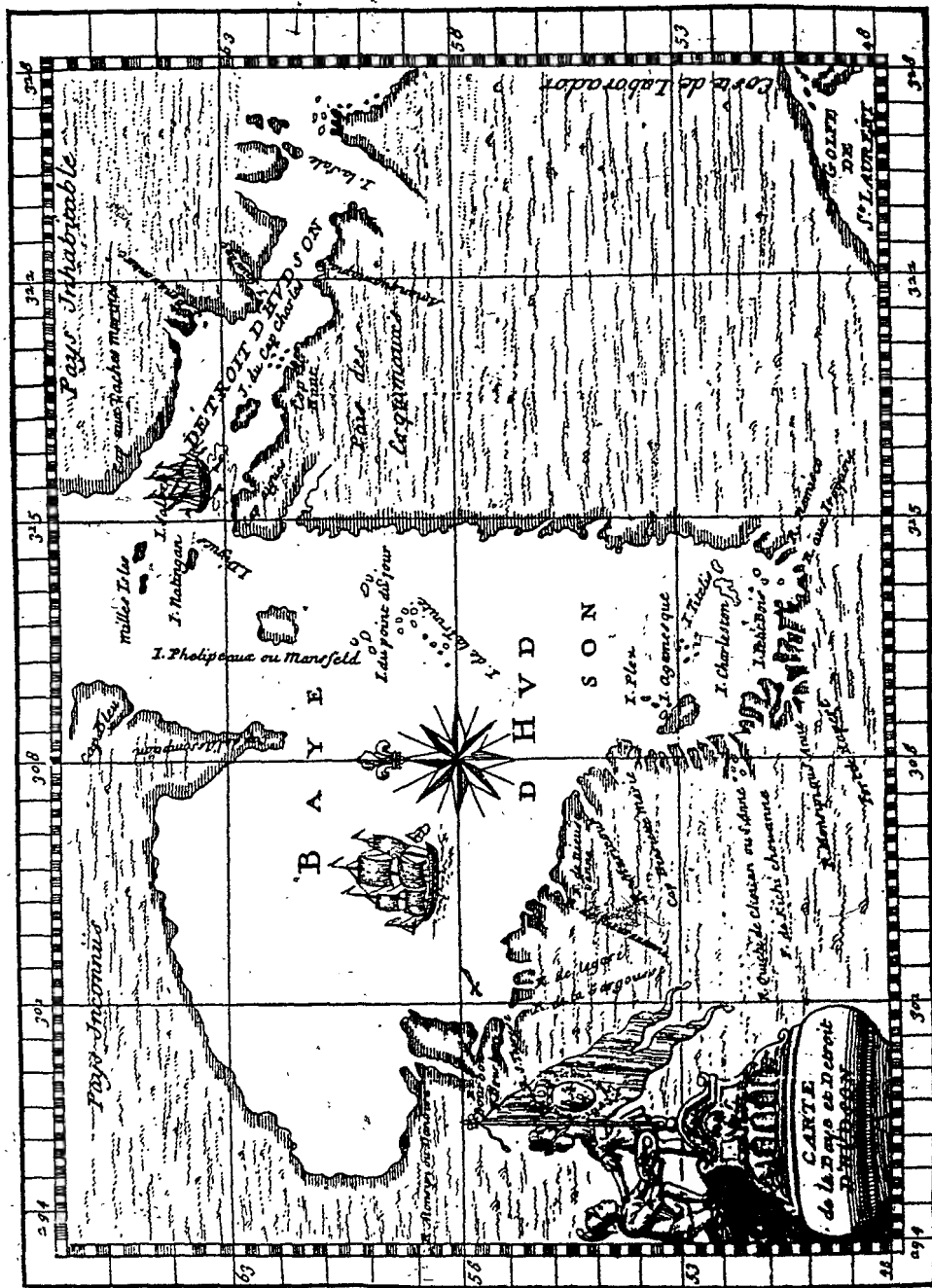
2. A second class of vexatious and forcible annoyances and controversies met by the company, sprang from the sturdy and uncompromising opposition of other British subjects to its illegal and grasping monopoly, its utter neglect of the primary object of exploration recognized in its charter, and its policy of intrigue and jealousy.

3. The last series of controversies, which in their resolute and effective agitations brought about a surrender of the charter, were incident to an attempt to plant a resident colony on a portion of its territory.

In dealing with the first of these classifications, we remind ourselves that Charles II restricted the terms of the gift in his charter of "Rupert's Land" to such territory as should not be held by any other Christian prince or his subjects. By the complacent usage of titles at the time, Louis XIII of France was a "Christian prince," and he had precisely the same claim and rights of possession to the territory of Hudson's Bay as the English monarchs had to regions farther south on the Atlantic coast, — the rights obtained by sighting the coast and entrance upon the shores. The king of France had by a charter in 1626, forty-four years previous to that of Rupert's Land, conveyed to the Company of New France the region now known as Canada, and the whole region of Hudson's Bay, which had been



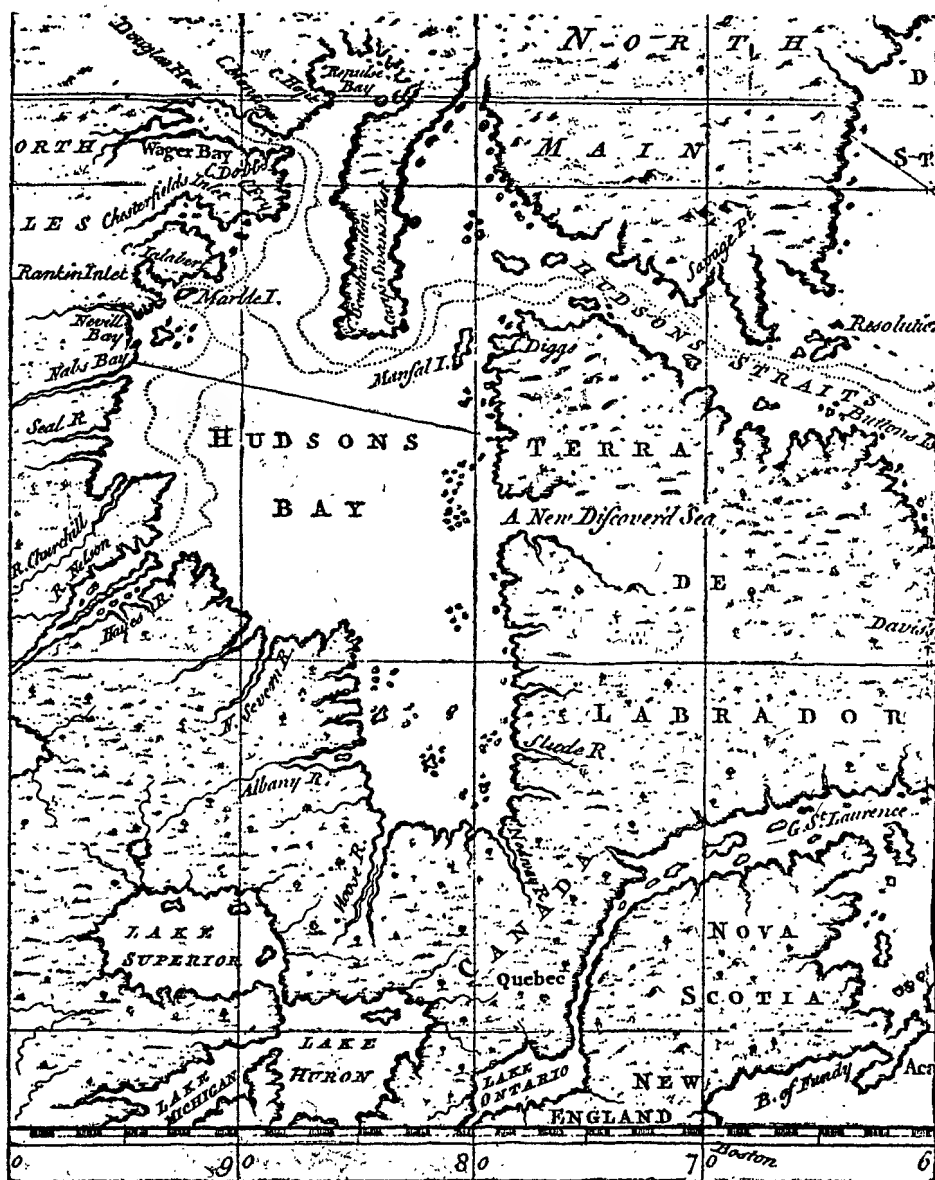
entered by French navigators. The first European that ever coursed the continent to the Rocky Mountains was a Frenchman, M. Varennes de la



HUDSON'S BAY, 1722.\*

\* [From *Bacqueville de la Potherie*. Bellin's map of 1744 is in Charlevoix. Other maps are in Prevost's *Voyages*, xiv. and xv.; and in the *Allg. Hist. der Reisen*, vols. xiv. (1756), xvi. (1756), and xvii. (1759). — ED.]

Verenderye,<sup>1</sup> in 1731. The country was also confirmed to France by the treaty at St. Germain's-en-Laye, thirty-eight years before Prince Rupert's charter. From the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 to the Peace of Paris in 1763,



ELLIS'S MAP, 1748.\*

there had been no distinct boundary drawn between territory claimed by the French in Canada and territory claimed by England in the Bay. But

<sup>1</sup> [See Vol. IV. — Ed.]

\* [A section of the *New chart of the parts where a northwest passage was sought in the years 1746 and 1747, exhibiting the track of the ships throughout that expedition*, which appeared in Henry Ellis's *Voyage to Hudson's Bay* (London, 1748). — Ed.]

in maps of the time authorized by both parties, the Red and the Saskatchewan rivers were alike recognized as belonging to France, though both rivers drained into the Bay. In the cession of Canada by France in 1763, there was no western boundary assigned to Canada, but the French had claimed to the Pacific. By the eighth article of the Treaty of Ryswick, in 1697, the whole of Hudson's Bay was recognized as belonging to the crown of France, no allusion being made to the claims of the Hudson's Bay Company. By the Treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, a portion of the shores of the Bay was ceded to England, which only then for the first time could claim undisputed possession. The treaty also protected the rights of the Company of New France. As the English crown did not acquire any of the territory till long after the death of Charles II, of course a charter from him was null. Not only is there abundant documentary and official evidence of the

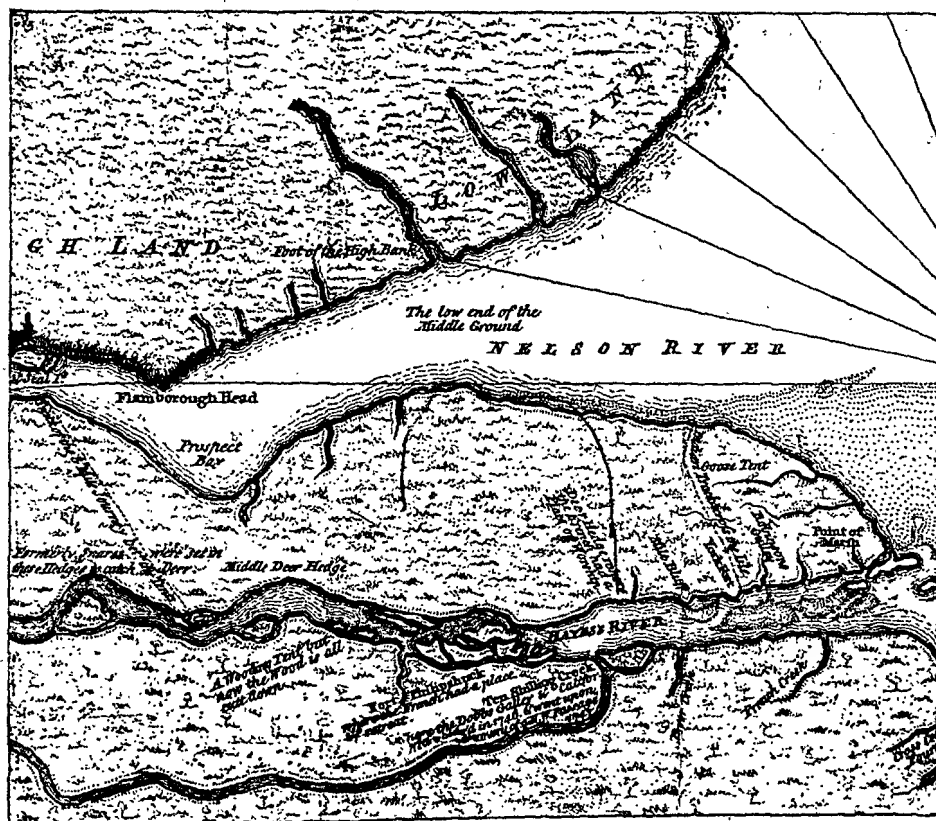


DOUGLAS HARBOR.\*

prior and the never abandoned possession of the territory by France, but French subjects invariably took for granted their rights of exploration, hunting, and occupancy over the whole region. The grant of any exclusive privilege in the western territory by the crown of England was a breach of the articles of capitulation with France in 1763. The valleys of the Saskatchewan and the Assiniboin were not entered by the Bay Company till long after the cession of Canada. The French traders had a hundred years the start in many of the company's interior posts. Nor did the French, after they had come to the knowledge of the presence of Englishmen in the Bay, under pretended charter rights, confine themselves to peaceful protests against the intrusion. While the company had as yet planted its posts only on the shores of James' Bay and at the mouth of Churchill and Hayes rivers, the French, by assaults in 1682 and 1686, and again under M. Jeremie, destroyed all the posts except Albany on the former bay, and held posses-

\* [Fac-simile from a plate in Ellis's *Voyage to Hudson's Bay* (London, 1748). — Ed.]

sion of York Fort, which they called Fort Bourbon, from 1697 to 1714.<sup>1</sup> In a petition of the company to Charles II in 1682, protection had been asked against a threat of the governor of Canada, De la B  re, of an assault upon its posts. In petitions by the company to the Lords Commissioners of Trade in 1697 and 1698, it asks that the French may not be allowed to travel or trade "beyond the midway betwixt Canada and Albany Fort, which we reckon to be within the bounds of our charter." The French am-



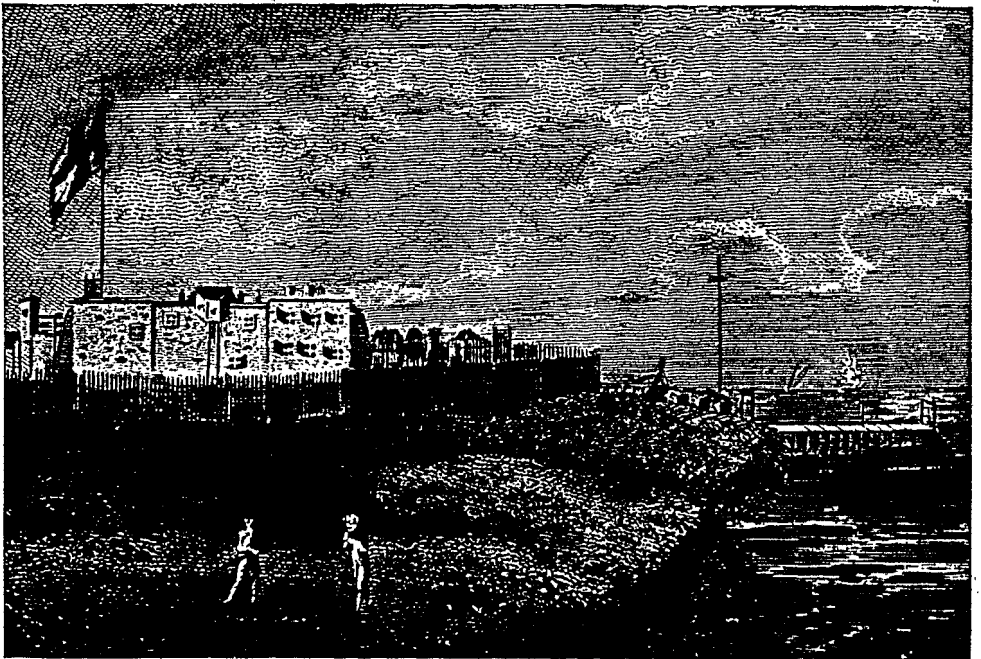
NELSON AND HAYES RIVERS.\*

bassador, in answer to a memorial in 1699, asserted the claims of his sovereign to the whole bay on the north, which he insisted was comprehended within the limits of the grants to his subjects. In the previous expeditions of the French, with Indian allies, against the early bay posts, the assailants had crossed the height of land between Canada and James' Bay. The expedition of Admiral la Perouse against the two principal forts of the company in 1782, was a bold and effective blow, which there seems to have been not even an attempt to parry or to avenge. It was a year in which

<sup>1</sup> Papers relating to the claims of France, in *British Documents, Reports of Committees*, vol. xv, pp. 374 et seq.

\* [Fac-simile of a part of the map in Joseph Robson's *Hudson's Bay* (London, 1752). — ED.]

the smallpox was making most devastating havoc among the Indians of the interior. Perouse appeared off York Fort with a fleet of three ships on the 8th of August. The fort was a strong one, of stone, and had been forty years in building, at very heavy expense, having been planned and superintended by Robson, in 1742.<sup>1</sup> It had forty cannon, and abundant ammunition and provision. But it was held by only thirty-nine men, when its complement would have been four hundred. Not the slightest resistance was offered to the fleet. The officer at the post at once surrendered. The commander pulled down the British flag and held out one of his own tablecloths. The fort was sacked, plundered, and devastated, a vast quantity of



PRINCE OF WALES FORT, HUDSON'S BAY.\*

valuable peltry-being carried off by the fleet. On the 21st of August the same unresisted capture was made of Churchill Fort. This had sixty men and twelve Indians, thirteen cannon, twelve swivel-guns, all sorts of small arms, abundant provisions, and a fresh-water rivulet running through it. The commander went out with a white flag, and the French officer waved his handkerchief. The fort was plundered and burned, the inmates surrendering as prisoners. It had been held by the English unmolested since the peace of Utrecht. This, however, was the last time that a French flag waved from an English fort at the north.

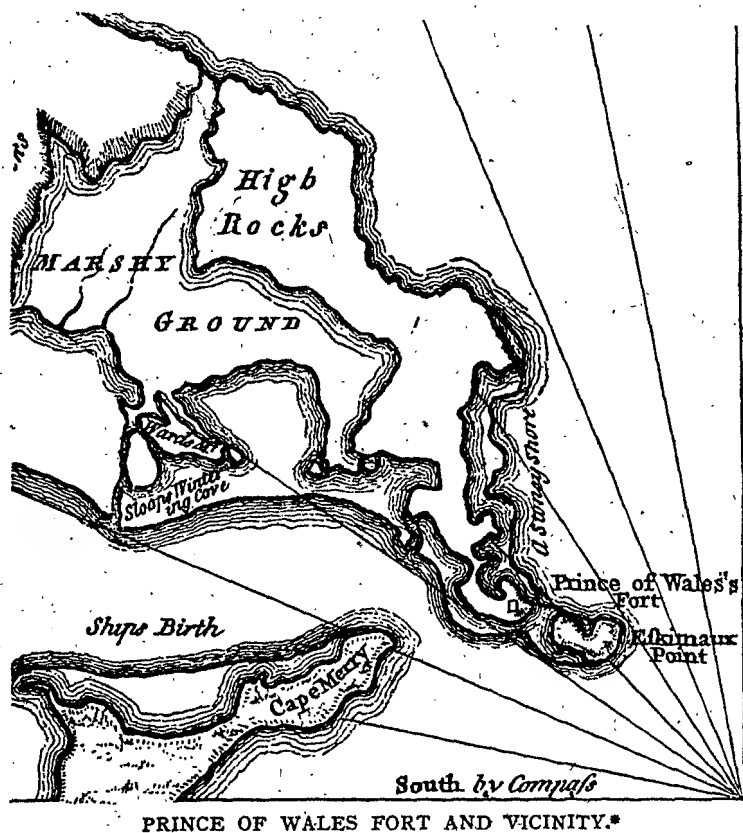
Such, without mention of many other acts of hostility, was the assured

<sup>1</sup> See Critical Essay.

\* [This view of the company's chief factory follows a print in the *European Mag.*, vol. xxxi. (June, 1797). It stood on Churchill River, near its mouth. — ED.]

and defiant spirit of the subjects of one "Christian prince," as shown in repeated bold and successful acts of opposition to what were regarded as trespasses of Englishmen on territory which was not admitted to be the property of the monarch who had generously made a gift of it. The martial method of dealing with the matter was as fully conformed to the "law of nations" as were the charter ways of disposing of other people's property.

One very great, perhaps we might on the whole call it an almost compensating, advantage accrued in the long run to the interest of the Hudson's Bay Company after the close of its warlike collisions with the French. It



was under the methods and training pursued by the French fur hunters and traders that there was provided for their English successors a breed of men most essential to the skilful and profitable conduct of the fur trade, whose characteristic aptitudes for the service will be again referred to. From the first coming of different European nationalities to this continent, and all along through their presence and their rivalries here, it was very evident that the qualities of Frenchmen secured to them in various ways the attachment, alliance, and intimate confidence of the Indians, while the relations of the English with the natives were always cold and distant, seldom friendly, never cordial. The voyageurs and bushrangers, whose services were indis-

\* [Facsimile of a part of *A draught of Churchill River*, in Robson's *Hudson's Bay* (London, 1752). — ED.]

pensable for such enterprises as the Bay Company pursued, were trained entirely by the Canadians. It was only after they had become thoroughly skilled in their needful work, throwing into it all their woodcraft, their wild impulses, and their reckless enthusiasm, that they were ready to enter into the employ of the Bay Company. Its youthful servants from the Orkneys, however ardent, athletic, or courageous, would have been no substitute for French half-breeds.

The second series of agitations and conflicts which involved the Hudson's Bay Company in vexatious and intense hostilities were substantially an entail or consequence of the primary wrong, the workings of which have just been discussed. The root of the difficulty was the grant by a charter from the king of England, with rights of monopoly for possession and traffic, over a vast and vaguely defined territory, encumbered, at least, by prior claims of French monarchs and their subjects. We have seen that the French in Canada asserted their rights, assured by a half century's earlier occupancy and improvement of the territory, and never relinquished. The French consequently had always dealt with the agents of the Bay Company as trespassers and intruders, and had plundered and destroyed its posts. On the cession of Canada by France to England, in 1763, its inhabitants became British subjects. These new British subjects very naturally believed that they acceded to certain rights of the soil and of opportunities and means for obtaining a livelihood which had been enjoyed and improved by them while they were French subjects. As a matter of course, therefore, they plied with increased vigor the only lucrative trade which their wilderness surroundings opened to them. Only a slight capital was necessary to conduct it as operated by individual enterprise; but associated means and efforts largely increased its facilities, and enabled partners to operate at extended distances. As will soon appear, a very energetic company was formed in Canada for the fur traffic, which speedily was met by rivalry from a similar company, while both alike, with all individual traders, were brought into direct and bitter antagonism with the chartered monopolists. Before a summary statement is given of these rival operations and of the method by which they were compromised, reference must be made to other hostile movements against the company in resistance of its monopoly and its secret policy, which were set in action also by British subjects, but of another class, residing in England, and having in view other objects than simply that of the fur trade.

We must remind ourselves of that alluring aim and passion of all the earliest as well as of the most recent navigators to this hemisphere, and of their royal patrons, to find a water-way through this island, archipelago, or continent, whichever it might prove to be, to Cathay in India. Columbus died in the belief that he had reached the coast of Asia without passing intervening lands; but it was not long before the presence of such intervening lands was patent, and the great problem of a navigable water-way

through them demanded a solution. In 1540 the king of France made a grant of Canada to Cartier as "un des bouts de l'Asie." Lachine, on the St. Lawrence, near Montreal, perpetuates by its name the fond hope of La Salle, that that place was the starting-point by the Ottawa for entering the coveted water-way to China.<sup>1</sup> Prince Rupert and his associates had obtained their charter as the "Governor and Company of Adventurers in England," under the plea that their object was "the discovery of a new passage into the South Sea." Many Englishmen, from motives of gain of various kinds, and from higher motives, were eager to have that discovery made, and even to venture their own property and lives in the enterprise. Joint-stock companies were formed to advance it. Parliament had offered a reward of £20,000 for the verification of the belief that such a passage was a reality. But soon the surprising and astounding fact came to the knowledge of the generous adventurers, that the privileged company, holding its royal patent, instead of seeking to advance its avowed and pledged object, neglected all effort and enterprise in that direction, and, worse than that, opposed, obstructed, and thwarted every independent movement to effect an object which in honor and obligation it should have been foremost to advance. The company was likewise pledged "to find some trade for furs, minerals, and other considerable commodities." It stayed by the furs. Hudson's Straits were believed to open to rich mineral regions, and were known to hold treasures of the sea. The whole zeal of the company, not given to its own traffic, was spent upon warning off all adventurers from risking themselves in such barren, desolate, and inhospitable regions. The meanness and rapacity of the company aroused against it an intense hostility among English mariners and merchants. This resulted in a petition to the lords in council in 1749, exposing the mischievous monopoly and policy of the company as having used its privileges to obstruct the noble objects it was intended to advance. The petitioners sought to be incorporated, with similar rights of land and water over the regions adjacent to those of the company for advancing discovery and trade. An explanation is given on a later page of the means by which this, like all the other public impeachments of the company, failed of its object.<sup>2</sup>

The policy of prohibiting exploration and settlement was in the case of the Hudson Bay Company pursued by a breach in their covenanted obligations and in the interest of their own monopoly. The company may be said to have been goaded and shamed into patronage of its first enterprise of exploration one hundred years after the date of its charter. Reports had been circulated by some wandering Indians from the north, near the Arctic circle, of a vast and navigable river in a region rich with furs and with minerals. The resident governor of the company was moved to address the managers in England with the proposal of an expedition for

<sup>1</sup> [The history of the search for the Straits of Anian, as this supposed passage was called, is given in Vol. II. — Ed.]

<sup>2</sup> See the reference in the Critical Essay to the work of Arthur Dobbs.



discovery, and Samuel Hearne, an officer of the company, was sent forth under its auspices. He left Churchill, the most northern post, in November, 1769. Midway on his errand he returned twice, being deserted by some of his Indians, and some of his instruments having become unserviceable. Starting a third time, in December, 1770, he traced the Coppermine River to its mouth, and was the first of Europeans to look into the Arctic



ALEXANDER MACKENZIE.\*

circle. His own scientific skill, as well as his instruments, were insufficient for making trustworthy observations, and his enterprise was hardly satisfactory.

The rival North West Company, not to be outdone in this exacting service, sent Alexander Mackenzie in 1789. He followed the river, which received his name, in an unimpeded course for eight hundred miles. He too saw the Arctic Sea, and was the first Englishman to pass the Rocky

\* [After Sir Thomas Lawrence's picture as engraved by P. Condé in Sir Alexander Mackenzie's *Voyages from Montreal to the Frozen and Pacific oceans, 1789 and 1793* (Philad., 1802). There is another portrait and a map of his route in the *Allg. Geog. Ephemeriden* (1802), vol. ix. — Ed.]

Mountains, being followed by Findlay, Fraser, and Thompson. The third expedition, the first that was undertaken by the British government, was that of Sir John Franklin in 1820. He advanced the exploration, but met with terrible disaster and suffering on his return, making a second expedition in 1825.



THOMAS SIMPSON.\*

The British government commissioned Sir John Ross on an expedition in 1829, and in 1832, aided by a private subscription, it sent Captain Sir George Back to search for him. The Hudson Bay Company now again takes up the work at its own charges. It sent one of its officers, Thomas Simpson, and Peter W. Dease, in 1836; and in 1838-9 it was supposed that the longed-for water-opening had been seen. Government thought itself generous in its rewards. It conferred a baronetcy on the London governor of the company, J. H. Pelly, and knighthood on the local resident governor, George Simpson. A pension of £100 was settled upon Messrs. Dease and T. Simpson. The mysterious death of the latter, by murder or suicide,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The biographer accepted the alternative that his brother was vengefully murdered through the cherished malice of the half-breeds who were attending him, and with a view to purloining his papers. But Mr. Alexander Ross, in his *Red River Settlement*, candidly reviewing the facts of the case, leaves it probable that Mr. Simpson fell by his own hand, he having previously given signs of an unsettled mind (pp. 225-233).

\* [Copied from J. Cook's engraving of S. P. Green's portrait of Simpson in Alexander Simpson's *Life and Travels of Thomas Simpson* (London, 1845). — Ed.]

when on his way through the prairies, on his return to England in 1840, closed his account. His brother, in a *Life of him*,<sup>1</sup> tells us how he sought in vain to secure the pension for needy heirs. No advantage in the special object to which the company restricted its aims accrued to it from any successes gained by itself or others in these explorations.

Returning to the subject of the collisions of the Hudson Bay Company with rivals in its special enterprise, we have to note a different method of business pursued by British fur traders from that which had been followed by the French before the cession of Canada. The French had traded under "licenses" granted by the authorities, accompanied by attempted prohibitions of the brandy traffic with the natives. But the British merchants in Canada demanded the liberty of free trade, and they exercised it. Single individuals, sometimes two or three in partnership, would furnish an outfit for employes, or go themselves on an expedition for furs. As might have been expected, sharp practices, jealousies, feuds, and sad demoralization among the Indians at once ensued. The latter were enlisted in groups or parties on the sides of the rivals, who would set themselves at watch to waylay, entrap, and barter with those who were in the service of their opponents. Many a dark and tragic scene was veiled in the depths of the wilderness, of which there are only legends, as culprits would keep their own secrets, and all legal proceedings were out of the possibility of enforcement. The effect was disastrous on the interests of traffic. The game was wasted, and in some places exhausted. Only in the winter season were the furs in good keeping, but the animals were slaughtered through the whole year, the cubs with their parents, with no respite for the breeding interval. Many merchants were brought to ruin, and if matters had continued in this course, only quarrels would have survived the occasion of them.

Under these circumstances, policy and self-interest dictated to some shrewd and sagacious men a course which, while it yielded a vast reward in profits to themselves, proved as destructive to the interests of the Hudson Bay Company. That monopoly might rest upon its charter, and make the most of it. Receiving its orders from the warehouse in Fenchurch Street, and clinging close to its dismal posts on the two inner bays, it waited for the natives to bring them the spoils of the hunt and trap. The rivals of the company had learned to adopt from it the strong power of combined capital, but for the rest knew of wiser methods of their own. They would have trained agents, partners in fact, who would go out and live in the wilderness on common terms with the natives, and do a turn of work for themselves. Some Boston and Albany traders had found the way to Montreal and Quebec free to them for business, after the cession of Canada. A strong organization was formed in 1805 of leading merchants in Canada who could furnish capital and the talent for enterprise. Under the name

<sup>1</sup> See Critical Essay.

of the North West Company, though without incorporation, this organization soon became a mighty power, most able and efficient in its working. Its chief managers, resident in Montreal and Quebec, were men of the highest consideration and influence. They felt their dignity, and inaugurated operations which inspirited social life around them with vivacious and romantic incidents well set off by scenes and actors.

In the parliamentary committee of inquiry into the affairs of the Hudson Bay Company, in 1857, — to be subsequently referred to, — the Right Hon. Edward Ellice, who was a member of the committee, also took the stand as a witness. He testified that he first went to Canada in 1803, and that then everybody of consequence was engaged in the fur trade, which, he said, was all the trade there was. As we shall see, he was the son of a great capitalist in Canada, and became a member of the North West Company, as he was also of a company which divided off from it, and finally of the Hudson Bay Company, when all rivalries had been conciliated. This witness had a rich experience in various animosities and rivalries, and showed his acuteness in his reserve as well as in his testimony. The North West Company having a vast warehouse at Montreal from which it sent out goods by the Ottawa and the northern route, had also a great depot at Fort William, northwest of Lake Superior. It had a class of its partners "on shares," who, under the name of "winterers," went off by the streams and lakes to reside deep in the interior among the natives, to instigate business, and to gather in the results of hunting and trapping. These were adventurous men, and soon became skilled in all woodcraft. A class of youths, chiefly Scotch, robust and hardy, were articulated as apprentice-clerks for seven years, receiving their subsistence and one hundred pounds. The prospective reward of their toil and fidelity was to become partners and shareholders, men of consequence among peers. So they worked with a will. There was a high zest of life for them in adventure, self-reliance, converse with novel scenes and picturesque companionship. Indian maidens cast in their lot with these "winterers" and the clerks, and the situation with its influences very naturally in most cases resulted in attaching them permanently to a mode of life ventured upon only as an incident. It was of the offspring of these and others, principally Canadians, French fathers and Indian mothers, that there came into the wilderness such a numerous progeny of half-breeds and persons of variously mixed blood, — the stock of these two classes, — the *coureurs de bois* and the *voyageurs*. For reasons which will suggest themselves, these half-breeds of French parentage far outnumbered those of English and Scotch parentage, and from their mixed inherited and transmitted qualities, their abandon, vivacity, recklessness, and ready affiliation with Indian ways, they were held to be superior for the service required. The North West Company had at one time nearly two thousand of this unique class of employés, going and coming, toiling after a rollicking fashion in its service, paddling and rowing the canoe or the boat, threading the reedy marshes, running the cascades, crossing the portage with their bur-

dens, trailing along the cataracts, bearing all the stern severities of winter in the woods, guiding the dog-sledges, camping in snowdrifts, ready on their return for wild carousals and dances, parting with the year's gains for finery and frolic, and then getting an easy shrift from their priests. The sagacity and pluck, the wide field-roving, and the gainful enterprise of the North West Company, though it was only tolerated in its existence and operations, threatened at one time wholly to crush the comparatively stagnant operations of the chartered Bay Company. Indeed, so profitable, for one period at least, was the field of this free associated enterprise that another volunteer company, which took the name of the "X Y Company," appeared on the scene. This was not in all respects in hostile rivalry to the North West Company, as some partners belonged to both of them, though each was complemented by those who were determined to share the spoils either as individuals or in partnership.



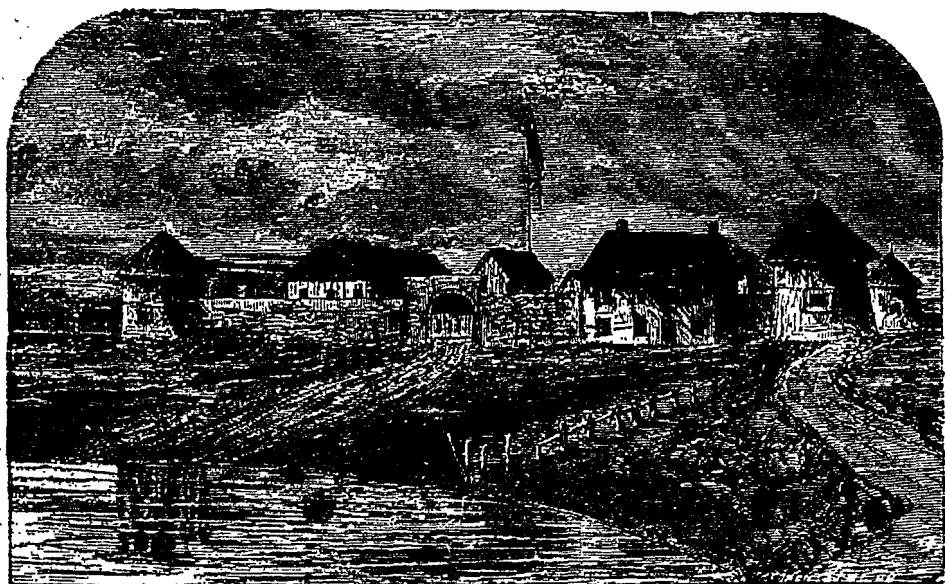
FORT GARRY AND NEIGHBORHOOD.\*

It was easy to see, however, what would very soon be the inevitable consequences of this method of action in the fierce rivalry and the exhaustive activity of vigorous parties in the fur trade, enforced by all the resources of combined capital. The buffalo, which was the main dependence for food at the posts and on the tramp, was wholly driven from vast expanses on the plains. The fur-bearing animals were threatened with extermination, and the natives were dangerously demoralized. The North West Company and the X Y Company found it wise for them to form a coalition, peaceable for themselves, but ominous for the Bay Company.

It was at an interval in this long warfare when the strife was fiercest that there came in an episode of historical interest which must briefly engage attention.

\* [From a drawing in Alex. J. Russell's *Red River Country* (Montréal, 1870). The fort is at the extreme right. Cf. drawing in Chas. Marshall's *Canadian Dominion* (London, 1871). — Ed.]

Near the beginning of this century the British government had to deal with the problem of providing for large numbers of poor Highlanders, evicted from their rude cottages and lands that the lordly nobles might turn the territory into deer forests. A party of these evicted tenants from Kildonan, in Sutherlandshire, were induced by the Earl of Selkirk to seek a new home in the centre of the American wilderness, in the chartered territory of the Hudson Bay Company. By purchase or by proxy, the earl, himself a large proprietor, had obtained control of the administration of the company in London when its stock was greatly depressed, and received from it in 1811, probably with but nominal compensation, a grant of 116,000 square miles for a settlement. Its central point was at the confluence of

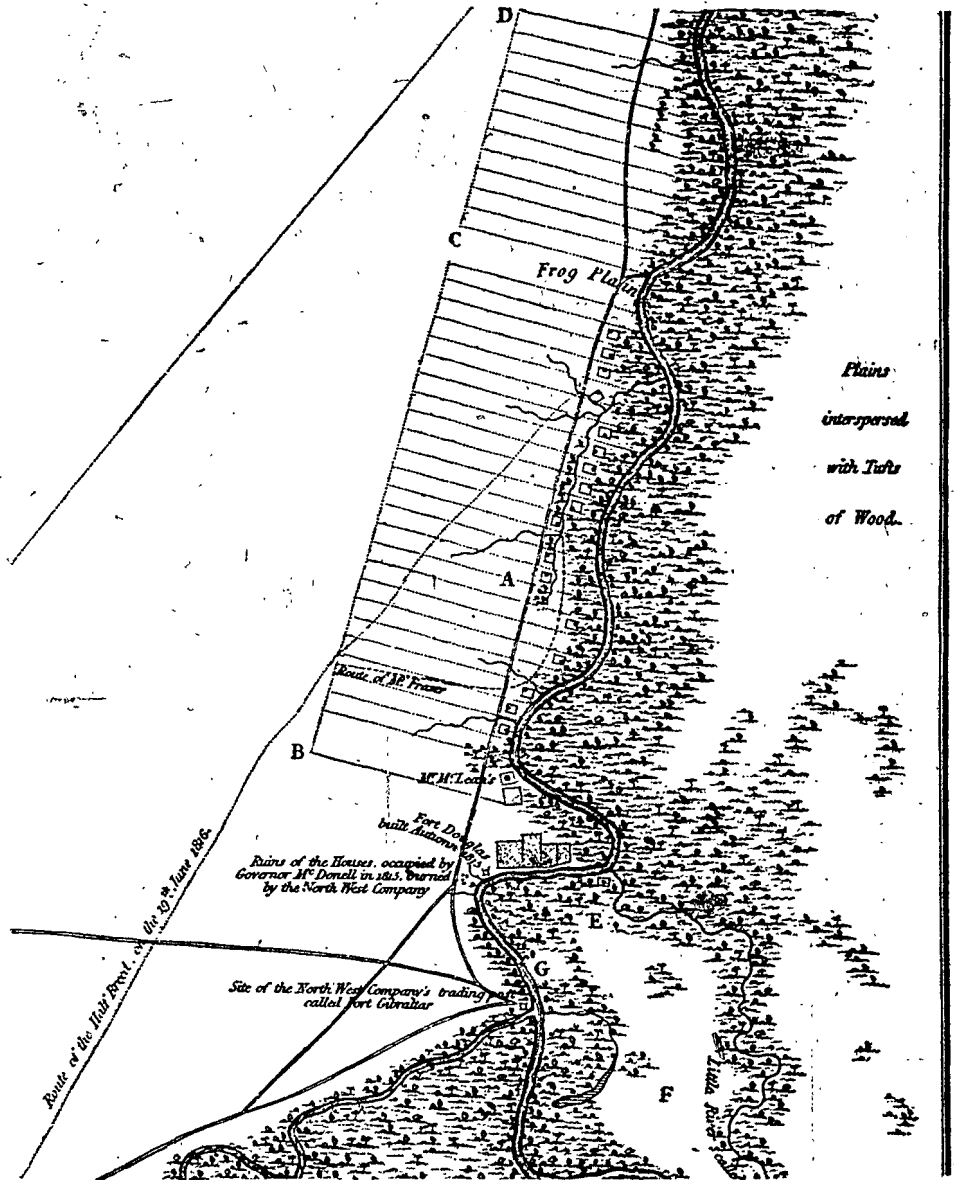


FORT GARRY.\*

the Red and the Assiniboin rivers. A party of the Highlanders, scantily furnished for the rough experiences before them, arrived at York Factory, on the bay, in the autumn, and there they were compelled to winter. Not till the following autumn, 1812, did they reach their destination at Fort Garry. Their route by water and portages had been through four hundred miles of river, with rocky ascents of seven hundred feet and an open lake voyage of three hundred miles. Desolate and piteous were their experiences for many years. In fact, they had actually started on their desperate effort to return to Scotland, when they were met by their patron the earl, in 1816, with a fresh body of settlers and supplies. They had been well-nigh reduced to starvation by the failure of their first crops, by devastating

\* [Reproduction of a cut in Dent's *Last Forty Years*, following a drawing by the Earl of Dufferin. There are other views in Alexander Ross's *Red River*; in S. H. Scudder's *Winnipeg Country, or Roughing it, with an eclipse Party by A. Rochester Fellow* (Boston, 1886); in Stuart Cumberland's *Queen's Highway from Ocean to Ocean* (London, 1887); in Jas. C. Hamilton's *Prairie Province* (Toronto, 1876).—ED.]

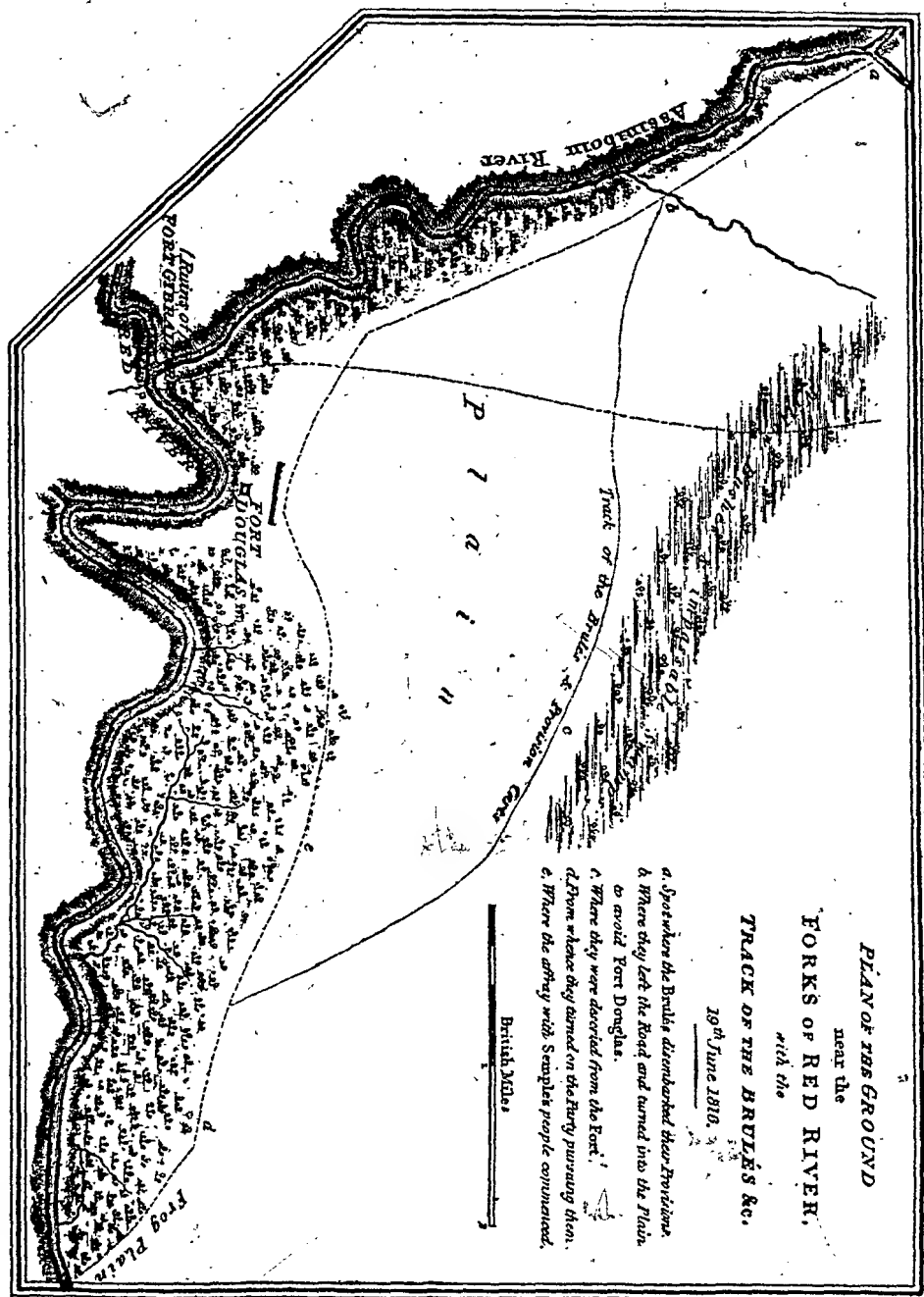
floods, and by devouring grasshoppers. It seemed as if the accumulations of misfortune had been visited more overwhelmingly and in all forms of ill upon them than upon any other severely tried company of wilderness exiles.



RED RIVER SETTLEMENT, JUNE, 1816.\*

\* [Extracted from the map in A. Amos's *Report of the Trials relative to the Destruction of the Earl of Selkirk's Settlement* (London, 1820). — KEY: A, the place where Gov. Semple and his party were massacred, 19th June, 1816. B to C, settlers' lots, established 1814; laid waste by the North West Company, 1815 and 1816; and reestablished 1817. C to D, lots laid waste in 1815 and not reestablished. E to F, where the Germans and Swiss of the Regiment de Meuron settled in 1817. G, site of chapel and other buildings, built in 1818 by Catholic missionaries from Quebec. Cf. plan of the Selkirk settlement in H. Y. Hind's *Canadian Red River Exploring Exped. of 1857* (London, 1860), p. 172. — Ed.]

But the worst of all their woes, one of which they had no warning, was that they found themselves on a scene which was the centre of a state of



SEMPLÉ'S MASSACRE.

NOTE. — [A small map contained in the large map in Alexander M'Donell's *Narrative of Transactions in the Red River Country* (London, 1819). Fort Gibraltar was a post of the North West Company; Fort Douglas belonged to Selkirk and the Hudson Bay Company. — Ed.]



real warfare between the Bay and the North West companies, where their rivalry was the sharpest and the most vindictive in its hostilities. Remote as the scene was from the Bay posts, the North West Company, with its traffic to Canada by its own route of travel, had strongly possessed itself here by its own posts, as a region for most lucrative traffic. Of course, these emigrant Highlanders were regarded as intruders of the most unwelcome and offensive sort, coming to break in upon the wilderness with the stir and noise and restraints of civilization. In a pitched fight on June 19, 1816, Governor Semple, the local governor of the Bay Company, with nearly a score of his supporters, were killed by the defiant forces of the North West Company. The sanguinary strife continued with increasing bitterness till 1820. Then a negotiation was instituted by Mr. Ellice, before referred to, which resulted in the union of the two companies in 1821, on equal terms. The proprietary rights of the chartered company seem to have been offset by the energetic enterprise of the Northwesters. No more European emigrants were sent to Lord Selkirk's settlement after his death in Switzerland in 1820.



*Selkirk*

*Kirk and Bright  
October seven  
1808\**

from the chiefs of the Salteaux and Cree tribes, the consideration being the annual payment of one hundred pounds of tobacco. The Crees at once and ever after denied that the Salteaux had any rights in the terri-

As this colonial enterprise of Lord Selkirk, known afterwards as the Red River Settlement, became so important and so troublesome an element in the affairs of the Bay Company, — opening, indeed, the controversy which closed only with the extinction of the company, — a few more particulars concerning it will be here in place. The founder of the colony was said to have had a religious object in view. It was not his intention that the colony should grow and be reinforced by further emigrants from Europe. Having been started by a sufficient body, equipped as agriculturists and mechanics, it was intended that retired servants of the Bay Company, half-breeds and converted and, so to speak, civilized savages, should find there a common and congenial residence, making a sort of oasis in the desert for a happy family. It proved a distressing caricature of such a fancy. In 1817 Selkirk obtained a deed of the territory

\* After a cut in Bryce's *Manitoba*.

tory.<sup>1</sup> So here was trouble from the old proprietors. Selkirk, being in Canada at the time of the bloody assault by the employes of the North West Company, in which Governor Semple and twenty of his party were killed, came with a military force by Fort William and partially restored order. For the first twelve years Selkirk managed the affairs of his colony, with lavish outlays and renewed enterprise, against multiplied discouragements. The undertaking was said to have brought his estate under a charge of £85,000. After his death, for about twelve more years, his executors nominally had the colony in charge. But the company really acted for them till, in 1838, it recovered the territory by full purchase.

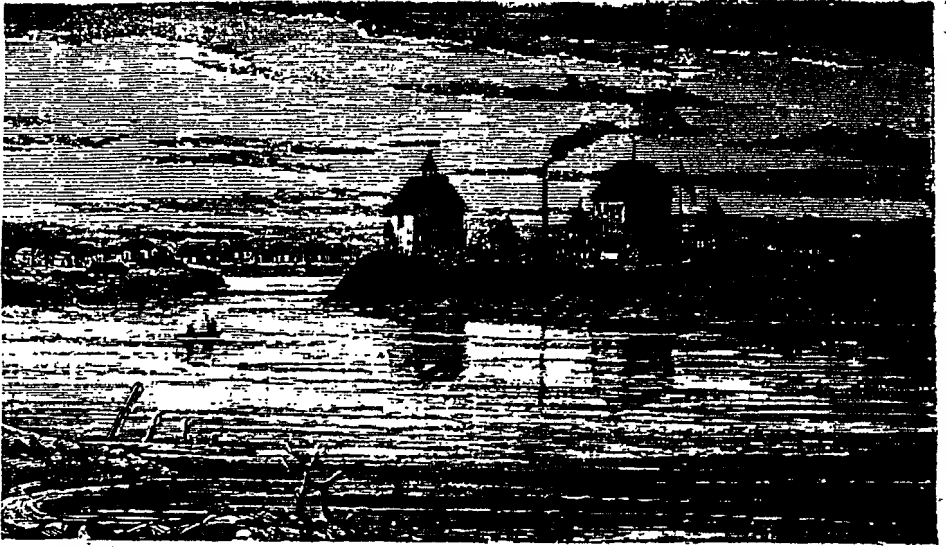
Probably there was never presented on the face of the earth a stranger medley, nor a more heterogeneous combination of the elements of humanity, than in the Red River Settlement. Planted seven hundred miles away from sea-water, and that mostly bound in ice, it was wholly isolated from the world. Its natural outlet for trade, if such it should ever have, — and it could not prosper without it, — was through the region now Minnesota, in the United States, whose people the Bay Company was resolute to exclude. A whole year was necessary for an answer to an order from Europe. Humanity was represented in the territory by English, French, Scotch, Swiss, and Indian, and before long by the inevitable Yankee. But few of these were permanent settlers, who cast in their lot for fixed residence. Nominally land was free to desirable occupants. But there proved to be annoying conditions imposed by the company; and humanity shaded off into many tints and colors, through English half-breeds and French half-breeds, and their progeny through generation after generation, in many variations. For religion, there was a free choice between paganism, the Roman and the English churches, Scotch Presbyterianism, Wesleyanism, etc. The magnates of the place were the retired servants of the company, with their Indian families, — comfortable, sure of the *otium*, tenacious of the *dignitas*.

The propitious coalition of the two companies gave the now strengthened proprietors under the old charter spirit to apply for, and influence to obtain, through Parliament, what was called an additional grant. It was obtained in the same year as that which ratified the coalition of the two rival companies. This was a grant of the right of "exclusive trade" over the re-

<sup>1</sup> When the parliamentary committee of inquiry of 1857 was engaged in investigating the affairs of the Bay Company, Penguin, the aged chief of the Salteaux tribe, wrote a letter complaining of the treatment received by him since this negotiation. His statement was fortified by testimonials, which he had received from Lord Selkirk and Sir George Simpson, of his friendliness, fidelity, and good service. As he was "in the decline of life and poor, Simpson had assured him an annuity for life from the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company of £5 sterling." Penguin charges that the contract with him had

never been fulfilled by Selkirk and his successors, though he had saved Selkirk's life, and that the land deeded had been vastly extended. He adds: "We have many things to complain of against the Hudson's Bay Company. They pay us little for our furs, and when we are old we are left to shift for ourselves. We could name many old men who have starved to death in sight of many of the company's principal forts." "The traders have never done anything but rob and keep us poor, but the farmers have taught us how to farm and raise cattle." (*British Documents, Reports of Committees*, vol. xv. p. 445.)

gion known as the "Indian Territory." This was an immense expanse of indefinitely bounded and scarcely penetrated wilderness, including the whole northwestern part of the continent, its waters draining into the Arctic and the Pacific. The grant thus made was *restricted* to such parts of North America as do not form a part of any British province, nor lands of the United States nor of any foreign power. The grant was also limited to a period of twenty-one years. Thus the Hudson Bay Company found itself in possession of two covenants, the latter covering territory now estimated to include 2,764,340 square miles, a trifle larger than that held by the original charter. No reference was made to this instrument, either to confirm,



CONFLUENCE OF THE RED AND ASSINIBOIN RIVERS, MANITOBA.\*

extend, or even recognize it, in the later grant. The policy of the company seems to have been to assume that the original charter needed no renewal, not venturing to invite upon it the light of modern legislation.

The most active agent in the negotiation for the union of the Bay and the North West companies was the Hon. Edward Ellice, then of London; his two chief partners being Simon McGillivray, also of London, and William McGillivray, of Montreal. The plea on which the grant of the Indian Territory was first asked of George IV was largely urged on the ground that it would benefit and protect the natives. Governor Pelly laid stress upon the hazardous character of the business, requiring unusual enterprise to meet its risks of heavy losses. The government had been deaf to the appeals of the company for protection covenanted to it by its charter. Its profits have been no more than reasonable, considering its service to the mother country, "by a commerce wrested out of the hands of foreigners,

\* [Reproduced from an engraving in J. C. Dent's *Last Forty Years*, ii. 104, after a drawing by the Earl of Dufferin. — Ed.]

subjects of Russia and the United States." The papers at the Colonial Office would show that during a long period of years, applications for protection and redress were made by the company without avail. The trouble continued till the rival parties, both nearly exhausted, were united. It was these considerations that first led to the license for exclusive trade in the Indian territories for a limited period of twenty-one years. The act also extended the jurisdiction of the civil and criminal courts of Canada over the chartered and the licensed territories of the company. A degree of tranquillity and of renewed prosperity followed the harmonizing and the legislative measures just rehearsed. The company, however, by thus concentrating and increasing its power, retained in exercise all the monopoliz-



FORT DOUGLAS, RED RIVER.\*

ing and other objectionable features of its policy which had stirred hostility to it; and at the same time it was involved in new controversies. Here we may properly close the review of the troubles encountered by the company from rivals disputing its prerogatives, and may turn to another class of its conflicts.

The third series of embarrassments and contentions in which the Bay Company was involved, in being challenged as to the validity of its charter and as to its general policy, is connected with its own halting consent to allow, and then in the obstructions which it put in the way of the prosperity of, a colony planted in a portion of its territory. The inquisition and discussion attending this series of contentions finally resulted in the extinction of the monopoly of the company, and the purchase of its proprie-

\* [Reduced from a cut in Bryce's *Manitoba* (p. 160), which follows a drawing by Selkirk in 1817. — Ed.]



counsel in 1816. Recalling the fact that the charter had been granted solely by the king, without the sanction of Parliament, it was pleaded that this royal prerogative had been judicially approved as allowed before the English Revolution, though not afterwards. The question of the validity of a similar royal charter had been raised in the case of the East India Company, and had been decided upon favorably in the King's Bench. Colonial officers, committees, and legal counsel seem on several occasions to have thought it wise not to open the fundamental question. Supposing, however, that the king might have lawfully granted a patent of territory, a vulnerable point was found in other grants conveyed by the charter. It gave a monopoly of trade to some British subjects, excluding all others; and the favored parties were empowered to impose fines and penalties, to arrest interlopers, and to seize and confiscate goods and ships. The charter had been strained to cover illegalities. It granted certain lands and waters "within the straits." These were to be reasonably limited, and not extended to lands two thousand miles distant. Some of those far-off regions were certainly to be left free to other British subjects. The French had laid a claim to the territory prior to that of Britain. Whatever the territorial rights of the French were, on the cession of Canada these rights would go through the king of England equally to all his subjects. Then, too, the sub-grant to Lord Selkirk was illegal, because the region was thus made independent of the company, and assigned to other uses than those of the company. The latter could only insist upon the rightfulness of all the claims which it asserted under the charter; and it urged that though the parliamentary sanction in the act of 1690, limited to seven years, had not been renewed, yet, in a series of acts, in 1708, 1744, 1803, and 1818, when rights of trade in America were secured to British subjects, there were saving clauses which protected the company.

In 1837, when only fifteen of the twenty-one years for which the license for "exclusive trade" with the natives in the Indian Territory had expired, the governor of the London company, J. H. Pelly,<sup>1</sup> asked of the crown a prospective renewal for twenty-one years further. The privilege sought was not to be exercised to the prejudice of any foreign power to the westward of the Rocky Mountains, with which there was a temporary convention. The company made a strong appeal on its claims and merits. Since the coalition with the North West Company there had been no rivalry, but much prosperity. There had been peace on the frontiers. The company had kept off the Russians from trespassing. It had favored explorations and polar expeditions, and hoped to complete the survey of the coast of the Polar Sea. The company had been at great charge to extend its establishments, and had made efforts for "the improvement and civilization of the country." Before the union of the companies the Russians and Americans

<sup>1</sup> There is a singular coincidence in the name. His cousin, Robert Pelly, was for a time local governor of a fur company, whose seal bore the legend, *Pro Pelle Cutem*, skin for skin. The company had also in its employ a Mr. Beaver and a Mr. Hunter.

had plied their enterprise with some success between Behring's Straits and the Mexican frontiers, including Astoria, and the North West Company had been sorely pressed. But now the Bay Company had strengthened itself on the Pacific, having sixteen establishments on the coast and sixteen in the near interior, several migratory and hunting parties, and six armed vessels, one a steamer, in the Pacific. With a view to a large agricultural settlement, Lord Selkirk's Red River colony had been planted, to be peopled by emigrants from Great Britain, and to draw in natives, with an aim to their civil, moral, and religious improvement, and to a large future export trade to the mother country. Selkirk's ownership had been extinguished by the company, and the result had been favorable. The population there was 2,000 whites and 3,000 natives and half-breeds, some of them substituting agriculture for hunting. Legal officers and courts were needed, and the company deserved the encouragement it would receive by a renewal of its privileges in the Indian Territory.

Accompanying this appeal from Governor Pelly in 1837 was a letter from the resident governor, George Simpson, reporting on the condition and state of trade in the Indian Territory previous to the license to the company. It had been a scene of lawlessness and outrage. Its Indian population was estimated at 120,000, and the liquor traffic had run riot in it. It was now tranquillized. The company derives very little benefit from the licensed territory beyond being helped to a more peaceable possession of their own. The region principally lies west of the Rocky Mountains, the most valuable portion of it bordering upon the Pacific. The company has found difficulty and scant profit in holding it against the schemes of Russia and America. But national pride prompts it to such energetic measures that it "has compelled the American adventurers to withdraw." The company is pressing hard upon the Russians, though supported by their own government and by military guards. The loss and damage to the company from the Russians in 1834 amounted to £20,000. As the territory, by a convention, is opened to the United States as well as to British subjects, the license leaves competition open. Then "the company is now promoting discovery, science, and surveys, at great expense"!

The company succeeded in obtaining, under date of May 30, 1838, a renewal of its territorial license for twenty-one years, with a reservation to the queen of a right to plant distinct colonies upon any portion of it.

In the petition of the company just rehearsed a reference is made to the trouble it encountered in the management of the Red River Settlement, with its mixed population of 5,000 whites, Indians, and half-breeds; dropping a suggestion that as this involved an expense of £5,000, the company might look to the government to repay it. We take up this annoyance from the colonial enterprise at a later period.

On February 17, 1847, a petition and memorial came before the colonial secretary of state, urging complaints against the Hudson Bay Company. The principal agent in this movement was Mr. A. K. Isbister, signing in

behalf of himself and many others, as "natives of Rupert's Land," and their "fellow-countrymen, Indians and half-breeds." The complaint was, that, acting under a charter which many high legal authorities believed had lost its force, the company had set up a harsh administration and pursued a ruinous policy. By its exclusive trade with the Indians, greatly to their own injury, the company secured a princely revenue, believed to be annually a quarter of a million sterling, and perpetuated, without any improvement, the wandering, precarious, and barbarous life of the natives. It had not established church or school in its settlement, but had left all effort in this direction to charitable, missionary, and Wesleyan societies. It had neglected all measures on its own part, and opposed those of others, for opening up the country, and had done so in order to keep the land in its wilderness condition, though game was rapidly decreasing and the Indians were dying out under the curse of the liquor traffic. The company employed many ignorant and loose, demoralized characters as its agents. Though the company has an exclusive right of purchase, this does not impair the right of the natives to sell to whatever parties they please. Yet when for a higher price they try to sell their furs to others, the company seizes and confiscates the goods.

This complaining memorial was supported by another in French, signed by nine hundred and seventy-seven residents of the Red River Settlement. The Earl of Elgin, governor-general of Canada, was instructed by the secretary to investigate the grievances. Distance, formalities, and other difficulties caused great delay in the correspondence. To such reports and documents as Governor Pelly, in behalf of the company, offered to meet the allegations, Mr. Isbister replied, sentence by sentence, presenting new evidence. It appeared that eleven different partnerships in the fur trade had been pressing their operations in the region of the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific. They had all been crushed by or absorbed in the giant monopoly.

In following up the issue, five retired servants of the company, who had been in its employ from six to fifteen years, were put under question as to its conduct of its affairs. Their testimony was in the main unfavorable to the company, tending to show the oppressive, unjust, and mischievous results of its policy, which was alike wrongful to the natives, the mother country, and to unprivileged British subjects. If the company's grasp over the "Indian Territory" could be released, many great advantages would follow. It would induce settlements, occupy the sea-coasts, and revive the rich fisheries of salmon, porpoise, and seal. It would lead to the working of mines of copper, silver, and lead. Plantations and cultivated lands would flourish with agriculture. The natives would be helped, and there would be a good export trade. All these prospective advantages were withstood by the truculent course of the company.

Mr. Isbister, learning that the committee had applied for information to the governor of Canada, thought that the government intended to send



commissioners to inquire and investigate on the ground. Being put on his guard, he wrote to Earl Grey that this would be wholly unsatisfactory, as the commissioners would be prejudiced by their necessary dependence upon the company for conveyance and support. Nor would the Indians be satisfied, as they would have to communicate their grievances only through the company's interpreters. The company will avail itself of all its devices and arbitrary means to shelter itself. Mr. Isbister proposes that at least there should attend the commissioners one person in the interest of the petitioners; the company being allowed the like privilege, if desired. Earl Grey applied to two British military officers, who successively for several months had resided at Fort Garry, in 1847 and 1848. Their answers were full, hearty, and earnest in defence of the company, and even laudatory of it. The inference, of course, was that they were under its spell. Earl Grey warmly espoused the side of the company, not seeing fit to open the question of the validity of its charter, and declining to bring the petition of the aggrieved Red River settlers before Parliament. He signified to Mr. Isbister that he must assume the expense of a judicial process if he chose to have one.

In 1846 a body of five hundred British troops had been sent to the settlement as if to preserve order, and had been withdrawn after two years, when a squad of pensioners followed. Mr. Alexander Ross, who was in the settlement at the time, says there was no other apparent reason for these military precautions than "the unmeaning fuss and gasconade of the Americans about the Oregon question."<sup>1</sup> Frequent references are found, in the occasions when the Bay Company was under the assaults of its opponents, to the valuable service it claimed to render to the British government in "resisting the encroachments of the Americans." The company was constantly alarmed by actual and threatened competition in the fur trade, first by parties of half-breeds and natives in its own settlements, and then by bold trespassers across the boundary line. Naturally enough, the jealousy of the company extended to trade and traffic in any articles within its own territories in which it was not itself a party. In the antagonism between it and the resident colonists represented by Mr. Isbister, we find the latter party fretting under the restrictions and impositions which prevented all expansion of the thrift and prosperity of the settlement. They complained that they really had no market for any surplus produce, and so had no motive to enterprise. The company had refused to export in its own ships — and no other ships were allowed in the bay — a quantity of tallow, brought to its depot by a settler. A half-breed and an Indian were forbidden to buy and sell furs in the colony. Vexations and annoyances of the most exasperating character were made to burden and depress the restive members of an isolated community at a time when, south of the boundary line, especially in Minnesota, American enterprise was advancing with giant strides. There had come into use in the settlement vast numbers of

<sup>1</sup> *Red River Settlement*, p. 364.

vehicles of a peculiar construction, known as "Red River carts," rough, strong, and easily repaired, made wholly of wood, without a particle of metal. Long processions of these went out over the plains, in the great buffalo hunts, to bring home the hides and meat from the thousands of carcasses. What more natural than that these should pass the border at Pembina, and open a profitable international commerce? But then the bugbear of free competition with the "Yankees" in peltry presented itself as a warning. The intelligent Mr. Ross, while admitting that an allowance of free trade in furs would have been disastrous, as introducing strife, bloodshed, and ruin, however insists that buying and bartering ought to have been allowed between the Indians and the half-breeds. It was not strange that the Canadians in the settlement should have been in strong sympathy with their brethren in Canada during the so-called "Papineau Rebellion," and have hoped for its success. The half-breeds raised the Papineau standard on the plains, where it hung for many years.

Mr. Isbister persevered in his efforts with government officials in England, especially with the Colonial Secretary, in order to bring the grievances of his fellow-colonists before the public, and to secure a redress. Of course, this involved a repetition of charges and complaints against the Bay Company, beginning with a denial of the validity of its charter, and covering all its policy as to trade, its utter neglect of all measures for educating and civilizing and converting the natives, and its actual reduction of many of them to abject destitution. He always came to this work of antagonism well fortified with facts and documents. Particularly did he controvert the pleas advanced on the side of the company: that the territories under its jurisdiction were wholly unsuitable for agricultural settlements; were barren, destitute of wood for building and fuel, and locked in ice and snow during so large a part of the year that grains and garden crops would not ripen. The company was too strong under its patronage to be worsted by all his appeals and exposures. The authorities would not through legal advisers open the question of the validity of the company's charter, and any complaint of mal-administration under it must be brought by complainants, at their own charges, before the proper tribunal. As we shall see, the solution of the problem came in due season from a proper source in Canada.

The colonists whom Lord Selkirk had led to his settlement, and their descendants, were Scotch Presbyterians. As such, they had what they felt to be a serious and an embittered grievance in their relations with the Bay Company. Selkirk had pledged to them that he would secure, to accompany them in their exile, a minister of their own kirk, and who should officiate in the Gaelic tongue. The promise was not fulfilled. In the buffetings and disasters which the exiles encountered during many years, shut in by a cordon of ice and savagery, with fighting and famine and wandering, they sorely missed the cheer and solace of their familiar ministrations. After Selkirk's death they thought the company had assumed his promises

and obligations. But when an appeal, with attested documents, was addressed to the office in London, the reply was that the company knew nothing of such an obligation, but would give a passage to a minister, if those who wished him would procure and support him. In the mean while these Presbyterians, with what grace they could, attended the services of the English Church at the settlement, greatly disliking its method and ritual. In vain did they appeal to each successive local governor, as he assumed office, to carry out the pledge made to them. Not till after the lapse of nearly forty years from their coming did the Presbyterians receive a minister of their own faith, and he was procured through friendly help from Canada. Three hundred of these colonists — sheep following their own shepherd — at once left the services of the English Church, thus provoking a new feud.<sup>1</sup>

The progress of the controversy over the Oregon boundary reveals many traces of the secret agency of the Hudson Bay Company in setting up claims and influencing public opinion. These traces are obvious in many articles in leading reviews and other publications, and in hints acted upon by British diplomats. Looking shrewdly to developments in the future, — which, however, were hurried in their advance by the vigorous pushing forward of settlers from the United States in still disputed territory, — the Bay Company in 1841 sent a party from the Red River to establish a colony on Vancouver's Island. The island was then supposed to be British territory. But when, by the treaty of 1846, Oregon fell to the United States, provision was made that the company should retain its territorial rights there. Dr. McLaughlin, who, as an agent of the North West Company, had been a strong opponent of the Bay Company, after the coalition in 1821 became a factor of the latter, and was made local governor west of the Rocky Mountains. He was regarded as indifferent to the company's interests, and as favoring settlers from the United States near the Columbia, so as effectually to weaken the claims of Great Britain to Oregon. When the colony from the Red River arrived it received but a cold welcome from him. The British grant to the company for a colony in Vancouver's Island was dated January 13, 1849. The draft of the charter,<sup>2</sup> as originally favored by Earl Grey, a strong champion of the company, was greatly modified before it passed the seals, the powers conferred by it on the company being reduced and qualified. Still the provisions of the charter were very objectionable, and were found to be quite unfavorable to those disposed to settle in the territory. Their grievances were plainly spoken when they discovered on the ground the restrictions and limitations attached to residence and trade. An object of the company in securing a footing on the island had in view the expiration in 1859 of its renewed twenty years' license in the Indian territories. The modifications introduced into the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ross, who was the most efficient agent in this work, gives a full account of it in his *Red River Settlement*.

<sup>2</sup> It is given by Martin. See Critical Essay.

draft of the charter fortunately provided some safeguards. The crown retained the right to recall the grant at the end of five years; and when the renewed term of the license for the Indian territories should expire in 1859, the crown might purchase the island by remunerating the company for its outlays. It is observable that by these cautious reservations of crown rights, both in the renewal of the license in the Indian Territory and in the Vancouver charter, no such limitless liberality for a monopoly as was indulged in the Bay charter was to be again ventured.

Now as the Hudson Bay Company, having warded off all challengers on its original fields, had intrenched itself on a new one, looking forward to security and perpetuity, we are to follow the course of inquiry and negotiation which led it to the release of its grasp.

The whole contents of a substantial folio volume of British documents<sup>1</sup> are devoted to a "Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company; together with the Proceedings of the Committee and Minutes of Evidence." The committee consisted of nineteen members, including Lord John Russell and Mr. Gladstone. Among the members was the Right Hon. Edward Ellice. As previously mentioned, he, as a most active member of the North West Company, had been a vigorous opponent of the Bay Company. After the coalition, he was a most strenuous champion of the latter. In this investigation he appears in two rôles: first, as a questioner, endeavoring to draw out or to suppress testimony agreeable or objectionable to him; second, as a witness, positive in his statements and skilled in reticence and reserve. The committee held some twenty sessions, from February to July inclusive, and examined twenty-five witnesses. The commission was held in view of the near approach of the period when the renewed license for exclusive trade, in 1838, for twenty-one years, granted to the company in the Indian Territory, would expire. This alone would make it necessary that the condition of the whole of those vast regions administered by the company should be carefully considered. But other circumstances made such a course the duty of Parliament. Three reasons are mentioned: the desire of Canadian fellow-subjects of extension and settlement over a portion of the territory; the provision of suitable administration over the affairs of Vancouver's Island; and the condition of the settlement on the Red River. Chief Justice Draper was commissioned by the government of Canada to watch the inquiry, and he offered testimony. There was put in evidence taken before a committee of the legislative assembly. The committee also had the opinion of the law officers of the crown on points connected with the charter of the Bay Company. The inquiry covered three descriptions of territory, — the chartered or Rupert's Land, the Indian Territory, and Vancouver's Island. The committee came to the conclusion that, as one object of imperial policy, it was essential to meet the just and reasonable wishes of Canada to annex some portion of the neighbor-

<sup>1</sup> *Reports from Committees*, vol. xv. 1857.

ing land best suited for communication and settlement, for which she would provide the means of local administration. The districts best suited for this are those on the Red River and the Saskatchewan. It is hoped that arrangements may be made between the government and the Bay Company for ceding to Canada on equitable principles these districts, the authority of the company in them then to cease. The details of the arrangement would be maturely considered by Parliament. If Canada is not at once ready to undertake the government of the Red River district, some temporary provision may be made. It will be well, as soon as convenient, to terminate the connection between the company and Vancouver's Island, and to extend the colony on the latter. As to the extensive regions both of Rupert's Land and of the Indian Territory, of which there is no present prospect of their settlement by any of the European race, view must be had to three possible dangers: the risks of lawlessness and disorder; the fatal effects on the natives of competition in the fur trade, and the greater freedom for introducing spirits; and the danger of the indiscriminate destruction of the fur-bearing animals. For these reasons the committee judge that, whatever may be the validity, or otherwise, of the rights claimed by the company under its charter, it is desirable that it should continue to hold its privilege of exclusive trade, though limited by the foregoing considerations. The committee cannot say how far the claims of the company, based on its chartered rights, may obstruct, but hope for an amicable adjustment of the matter, through conciliation and justice. A bill in the next session of Parliament may provide an equitable and satisfactory arrangement.

Before making a cursory review of the points of inquiry and evidence in this elaborate parliamentary investigation, an incidental topic presents itself in the appearance, as both a member of the committee and as a witness before it, of a gentleman already referred to, the Right Honorable Edward Ellice. His associates must have found some amusement in his skill and fence. In questioning witnesses he showed that skill in seeking to guard the credit and interest of the company: he would draw out vouchers of the necessity, the justice, and the practical wisdom of its policy; that it treated the natives humanely, providing for their own improvement, medical service, and civilization; that it was compelled to forbid competition in trade; and that its territory was wholly unsuited for agricultural settlements. Mr. Ellice showed his fence as a witness by holding the committee strictly to its official authority within a certain range of inquiry. He dodged all questions of a personal or private nature. He stoutly refused to make revelations about the profits or to give the names of the shareholders of the company, intimating that that was not the committee's business. He was confronted with an extract from a book of his old partner, McGillivray.<sup>1</sup> This asserted that "Selkirk, having acquired the majority of votes, held the Bay Company under his thumb, and thus secured his immense tract of country, and that the attorney-general ought to look into it." Mr. Ellice

<sup>1</sup> *A Narrative of Occurrences in the Indian Countries of North America*, 1815.

naively replied that perhaps he himself was the author of that "libel" on the company. He had written and uttered as bad ones at the time of violent contests. He himself wrote a book in 1816.

The principal points of inquiry by the committee concerned the company's relations to the natives and influence upon them in trade and intercourse; the use of spirituous liquors; efforts of civilization and education; the profits of the company; the consequences of competition and free trade; the quality of the soil and its adaptation for flourishing agricultural settlements.

In all the official inquiries and hearings before the colonial board and parliamentary committees, when the affairs of the chartered company were brought under investigation in consequence of the frequent petitions and complaints coming from mercantile and other parties interested in opposition,—these petitions and complaints becoming steadily more earnest and severe till the object of them was effective,—the representatives of the company, as well as its assailants, were very sharply questioned as to the influence wrought by the policy of the company on the condition and experience of the aborigines. It seems to have been generally assumed that the company was under some obligation, expressed or implied, to have in view the welfare of the natives, to help and raise them as human beings, to add to their means and comforts of living, and to seek their moral and religious advancement. It has been already admitted that the charter imposed no obligation of this sort; that in fact it made no reference whatever to the subject. This fact, however, was not accepted as discharging the company from the manifest obligations of civilized humanity. The fact was notorious that the natives had been serviceable to the company in insuring it a scale of pecuniary profits unparalleled in any other mercantile business, and the interest was one of something better than curiosity to know how the other parties to the trade, who, by perilous and severe toil through a desolate wilderness, were subtracting from it its precious wealth, were benefited, or, it might be, injured in the results.

Many large and searching questions covering this subject were put in general terms. The answers to them, when not reluctantly made, were evasive and vague. As the questions became sharper, more specific, or pointed, the disclosures drawn forth were certainly unsatisfactory in the light of humanity, even if they exposed a course of proceeding and dealing more or less compelled by circumstances or required by policy. The questions were such as these: Had the number of the Indians increased or decreased during the long period of the company's intercourse with them? Were their wild habits softened and their physical comforts multiplied? Had they been persuaded and aided to take the first steps toward civilization by forming fixed abodes, subduing parcels of ground, devoting themselves to tillage in its simplest processes, and making provision in times of plenty for the seasons of famine, during which it was known that starvation had frequently driven many of them to cannibalism?

Did the company provide at its posts surgeons and physicians, medical and hospital stores, for the aged and infirm Indians who had been in its service? Had any efforts been made and any expense been incurred by the company in providing schools and moral and religious instruction for the natives?

It is interesting to scan the information drawn out from the friends as well as from the opponents of the company in answer to these searching questions. The information has a very important bearing upon a subject on which much has been said and written without a proper regard for the facts involved in it. There has been very much boasting and complacency on the part of Englishmen, and very much of censorious criticism uttered by them, on the plea that the American aborigines have always received far more just and humane treatment from all the various classes of Englishmen, traders, colonists, and soldiers, than from the citizens of the United States; that Englishmen have almost uniformly been at peace with them, while American citizens have been in a continuous state of warfare; that they have multiplied under British dealing with them, and wasted away from the contact of the United States. Leaving out of view much else that might be said on this subject, especially the prime consideration of the steady pushing on the frontiers of civilization in the interests of the actual settlement and improvement of territory by American citizens, an enterprise never entered upon by Englishmen till within quite recent years, enough information was drawn out, in the inquiries just referred to, to reduce all grounds of boasting or complacency on the side of Englishmen.

It was shown, as a matter of course, that the relations of the company and its servants with the Indians had been uniformly peaceful and friendly. Any acts of trespass, or insolence, or violence on the part of the intruding Englishmen, who had come, not to settle, but to traffic, and that, too, in articles which they themselves could not directly obtain, would have been worse than folly. The first stations of the company were close to the shores of the bay, and it was very long before it ventured to penetrate farther in towards the interior at positions on lake and river connecting outposts with their base. And when it did so, it was only tentatively, feeling the way carefully, and after having assured the interest of the nearest Indians by traffic. Peace was a prime essential. True, some of the posts of the company from the first, and those afterwards advanced farthest inland, were called "forts" as well as "factories." But the term "fort" could not in seriousness be attached to more than some half dozen of the posts from first to last occupied by the company, especially two upon the bay and two upon the Red River territory. A simple stockade surrounding a blockhouse was generally the most that was offered in the way of protection and defence. And some of the most exposed trading posts, the farthest inland, were wholly defenceless. Their security against violence lay entirely in the recognition that each one of them represented a powerful company, with which Indians were concerned to be in amity.

The company was understood to admit that its influence over and its

effect upon the natives, especially such of them as were not in most intimate relations, with its officers and servants, had been impaired and modified by rivalry in the fur trade, by the license of individual traffickers, and by other agencies interfering with its sole responsibility in the matter. Where the company regarded itself as alone in the field, its monopoly was held as investing it with a sort of judicial authority and obligation. So long as it had only the natives to deal with, and the intercourse of the natives was confined strictly to its officers and servants, order and amity were preserved. The natives regarded these first white men, furnished with all the cunning instruments and appliances of civilization, medicines, tools, clocks, burning-glasses, music-boxes, and magic-lanterns, as a superior sort of beings, evidently in favor with the great "Manitou." These supposed supernatural resources were not disclaimed by those who found their account in the assumed possession of them. But when free traders from Canada and the United States, and missionaries with their various creeds, came in to tempt, and bribe, and confound the natives, the influence of the company over them was greatly reduced, and it was very ready to diminish its sense of responsibility.<sup>1</sup> A prominent resident in the colony, not unfriendly to the company, and himself an earnest Scotch Presbyterian, utters himself very frankly upon this point: "It is denied by many, nor do we pledge ourselves to the fact, that the company ever contemplated such a sacrifice [the support of missionaries] for the sake of the gospel; but this we know, and so may others who are in the least conversant with the nature of their trade know, that the introduction of Christianity to Rupert's Land was destructive of its very sinews."<sup>2</sup> This certainly is a most frank admission of the fact that the engrossing interest of the company was to regard and to use the natives with sole reference to a mercantile object, without care for anything that would elevate them in the scale of humanity or improve their own condition. It appeared in evidence that some of the more influential officers and representatives of the company withstood the efforts of missionaries in the settlement to induce in their converts a suspension of ordinary labors on the Sabbath.<sup>3</sup>

As for the rest, the whole weight of the evidence drawn from the questioning of the company as to its relations with the natives, on the matters above referred to, disclosed that the company acted with sole and exclusive regard to its one towering, paramount, and absorbing aim, the accumulation of profit from trade. Whatever tended to advance this object the company favored; whatever would hinder or was inconsistent with it, the company resolutely opposed. The Indian was to be drawn into the condition of dependence, and the more earnest and industrious he could be induced to

<sup>1</sup> See Lieut. Butler's Report to Lieut.-Gov. Archibald, of Manitoba, Appendix to Butler's *Great Lone Land*.

<sup>2</sup> Ross's *Red River Settlement*, p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> A sly reflection upon the wholly secular aims of the company was dropped in a witty

sarcasm uttered by an observer of its policy. Being asked by a stranger the meaning of the letters "H. B. C." inscribed on the flying flag at one of the posts, he answered, "Here Before Christ."



become the better for the company, if not for him. It soon became the custom of the company to keep all the natives that hunted and trapped for it in its debt, by making an advance to them in supplies, when settling the accounts of the previous year. The natives were in fact reduced to a state of slavish dependence on the traders. It would have been not only difficult as against the whole grain and bent of nature in the man of the wilderness, but equally as thwarting the greed of the traders, to have induced the former to apply himself to the tasks of agriculture. When his presence and labor were needed to till and gather his crops, he would be away, perhaps hundreds of miles, hunting and trapping. The Indians in fact became so increasingly and wholly dependent upon the resources of the company as to render themselves perfectly wretched without it. Before the coming of the fur traders they had had warring in their tribes, to what extent in losses or calamities no servant of the company, with a view to the interests of history, seems to have concerned himself to learn when the information might have been obtained. Up to their intercourse with the whites, the Indians had found their own implements, weapons, and resources wholly sufficient for them. It was afterwards found that when these had been disused for a generation it took nearly a lifetime to learn to make them serviceable again. The subsistence and clothing of a few scattered Indians required but a slight draft upon the creatures of the wilderness. Every portion and fragment of a buffalo, hide, flesh, sinew, horn, tendon, and bone, served some frugal use of the Indians. But when thousands of these hordes on the plains were slaughtered for their hides and tongues only, it was found that the terms "infinite" and "countless," applied to their numbers, were exaggerations. When the beaver, the silver-fox, the marten, and the otter had a value assigned to them by fashion, in London, Paris, and China, the instincts of these creatures were circumvented by the intelligent greed of the savage, and the slaughter raged among them. Firearms, ammunition, and steel traps triumphed over the bow and arrow and the simple snare. An entire change was brought about in the character and habits of whole tribes of Indians. Game in many localities was exhausted, and when no peltries were brought into the posts the supplies failed. Starvation followed. It was proved that the company had not provided physicians and refuges, and that it had done nothing for the teaching of the Indians or for their moral and religious welfare; that missionaries and teachers, after long complaint and remonstrance, had been forced into the territories of the company by benevolent agencies; and that when the company had been shamed into a grudging addition of a pittance for these objects, it was used as "a sop" to avert or silence just complaints. And worst of all, a vast amount of evidence proved that whenever and wherever the company was in rivalry or collision with other bodies, or even with single individuals, in the fur trade, it made the freest use of intoxicating liquors, to the most fearful demoralization and ruin of the Indians.

The writer of these pages need hardly interpose a disclaimer that these

statements, presented as they appear on the record, are offered merely to offset the plea that the natives of this continent have fared better by the hands of Englishmen than of Americans. The facts here reviewed are suggestive of a more instructive lesson. An intelligent observer might well have been led to imagine that, in view of that perplexing and always disheartening question, — What ought to have been the relations into which Europeans should have placed themselves with the natives, with any hopefulness of justice and humanity toward them? — the opportunities of the Hudson Bay Company would have been especially favorable. Amity, cordiality, strict equity, and mutual advantage, were objects of primary importance to both parties. Beyond those the more favored of the parties might have regarded itself as under obligations imposed by humanity and generosity. Of these the company was not considerate. In the game of profit and loss, the company was the only winner.<sup>1</sup>

In all the more searching inquiries into the affairs of the company there were, of course, repeated efforts made to ascertain the profits accruing from its trade and operations. It is possible that, as these were known to have been very large, popular fancy and rumor may have foolishly exaggerated them. Only an expert who had full and free powers to examine its ledgers and accounts through its whole charter existence would have the means of reaching the exact facts of the matter. Such information as at different times was drawn from rather unwilling and reticent witnesses was incomplete and fragmentary. Perhaps as its operations were so extended and scattered in place and time, with so many open and progressive enterprises in action, the company found the accounts of several years running in together, so that outlay, income, balance of interest, and indebtedness were with difficulty separated. There was so much "watering of stock," as the phrase now is, that a rate of interest on original capital became merged in its own premium. The company was always increasing its plant without assessment on its shareholders, but from its undivided profits. After its coalition with the North West Company, its field of operations and its force of agents and employes were vastly extended and increased. It was always planting new posts, and rarely abandoning old ones. The cost of

<sup>1</sup> A committee of the Aborigines Protection Society, in a communication under date of May 18, 1857, addressed to Mr. Labouchere, chairman of the parliamentary committee, make the following statement: "The monopoly of the fur trade, if not a compact for the benefit of the Indian, is an injustice, as it deprives him of the fair value of his toil, debars him from intercourse with civilized man and the ameliorating influences without which he can never rise in the scale of humanity. For the last two centuries has the right of exclusion been rigidly enforced from the shores of the Hudson's Bay, and never, perhaps, in the whole world and in all time has a fairer opportunity been offered for the regeneration of the Indian race. No

surrounding communities have acted upon them with evil and pernicious influences, no opposing interests have interfered with the most comprehensive and benevolent plans for their amelioration; they have been cut off from the intercourse, the contentions, and the contagion of the world. And yet what has been the result? The system which has made the company prosperous and powerful has made the Indian a slave, and his country a desert. He is at this day wandering about his native land without home or covering, as much a stranger to the blessings of civilization as when the white man first landed on his shores." *British Documents, Reports of Committees*, vol. xv. p. 444.

communicating with and manning the most distant ones, the sending supplies and the gathering in the furs, would postpone immediate returns. Indeed, it was asserted in behalf of the company that a period of five, and in some cases of even seven years might elapse before actual returns from a specific invoice of goods sent from the company's warehouse in London would reach it by the homeward-bound ship. It was known that the goods of all kinds purchased by the company for the Indian traffic were largely of an inferior sort. Some were manufactured for the purpose; some were damaged, some out of fashion. But they all were turned to good account. A quart of English spirits at sixpence, with one third water, reducing its cost to fourpence, was the equivalent of a beaver-skin, which brought at an average, in London, nine shillings. "A couple of cotton kerchiefs (the delight of a squaw), which my lady's maid would disdain to be the owner of, and a couple of ten-pound bank-notes from my lady's purse, mark the two extremes between which lies the history of a marten-skin or sable."<sup>1</sup>

The governor of the company in London, J. H. Pelly, under examination by the lords of committee of privy council, February 7, 1838, communicated these statements. From the date of the charter in 1670 for twenty years, to 1690, the returns of the company had been £118,014, and this notwithstanding the losses to their establishments by the French, between 1682 and 1688. There had been a dividend to shareholders in 1684 of fifty per cent. The like dividend was paid in 1688. In 1689 the dividend was twenty-five per cent. In 1690 the stock was trebled [watered] without any call being made on the shareholders. So the twenty-five per cent. dividend of that year was really seventy-five per cent. From 1692 to 1697 the damage done by the French in the capture of its establishments subjected the company to a loss of £97,500. This compelled the company to borrow money temporarily at six per cent. Yet, notwithstanding this, in 1720 it again trebled its capital stock, with a call on its shareholders of only ten per cent. Again the company suffered a severe loss from the French, in 1782, by the destruction of its posts by La Perouse. Then it paid for a while dividends of from five to twelve per cent., averaging nine per cent. Mr. Pelly testified that "the state of the books is defective." The original capital of the company of adventurers was £10,500. The returns of profit were so large that in 1690 it was agreed to set it down as treble, and to estimate it at £31,500. It was trebled again in 1720, and declared to be £94,500. In a new subscription it was agreed that £100 on each share should be counted as £300. In the coalition between the companies, each contributed £200,000 to a joint capital of £400,000. The reasons given for the first trebling of the capital were five: 1. The company had goods in its warehouses exceeding in value its original stock. 2. It had also as much more in its ships and cargoes. 3. It had rich deposits in its posts or factories. 4. It had provided many new posts. 5. It might expect remuneration for damages from the French.

<sup>1</sup> Butler's *Wild North Land*, p. 199.

In 1836 the company had paid the heirs of Lord Selkirk for the return of the Red River territory a sum which stood on its books as a balance between the cost, the interest added, and the profits deducted, at £84,111. In the region covered by the company's trade there were 136 posts, besides hunting and fishing stations: these were held by 25 chief factors, 27 chief traders, 152 clerks, and 1,200 regular, besides other temporary, servants, many of them natives. There were twenty-two principal trading and distributing centres. In the list of the company printed in November, 1847, there were 239 proprietors of stock of the capital of £400,000. Each member to be eligible to the committee of seven must hold at least £1,800 in stock. The sales of the furs were made several times a year, at auction, at the company's office in London. There were great variations in the prices. Thus, in 1839, 55,486 beaver skins brought £76,312. But in 1846, 45,389 brought only £7,856. Of an average revenue of £200,000, the profits beyond expenses were £110,000. In its most active trade, the annual export of the Bay was valued at £25,000.<sup>1</sup>

The annual profits were apportioned into one hundred shares. Of these the proprietors of stock received sixty; the other forty were divided between the chief factors and the chief traders, the former having two parts to the latter's one. This was instead of salary to such officials. On retiring from service the full payment was rendered for one year, and half the amount for the following five years, free from any risk through the company's losses. Thrifty apprentices would leave a large portion of their annual pay at interest in the hands of the company. Many who had been long in service retired on a fair competency. One such left a legacy of £10,000 to promote the interests of education and religion in the Red River Settlement. The company, by its method of dividing profits among its officials, secured their best coöperation more effectually than if it had paid a scale of salaries. When two chief traders retired, one clerk could be promoted. When two chief factors retired, a chief trader could be promoted. When the limited pensions of retired partners fell in, there was another chance for the promotion of a clerk.

In the inquiry before the parliamentary committee in 1857, it appeared, from the return of the secretary of the company, that it had voted to add £100,000 to the estimate of capital, and to have it stand at £500,000. The assets were then estimated, beyond liabilities, at £1,265,067 19s. 4d. During the ten years between 1847 and 1856, the annual dividends were ten per cent., besides more than twenty-three per cent. during the period paid as new stock. Of the 268 proprietors in July, 1856, 196 had pur-

<sup>1</sup> There were sold at the company's premises in London in the year 1848: 21,348 beaver skins, 54 pounds of coat beaver and pieces; 6,588 otter; 1,102 fishers; 900 silver foxes; 19,449 cross, white, and red foxes; 31,115 lynxes; 11,292 wolf; 908 wolverine; 150,785 marten or sable; 38,103 mink; 195 sea-otter; 150 fur seal; 2,997 bear; 18,553 muskrats; 1,651 swan; 632 cat; 2,889 deer; 2,090 raccoon, etc., etc. The sales in London, apart from those in Canada, the United States, China, etc., exceed £200,000. (Ryerson's *Hudson's Bay*, 121.) The writer says the cargo of the vessel in which he sailed from the Bay to London, in 1854, was valued at £120,000.

chased their stock from 220 to 240 per cent. Governor Pelly admitted that from 1690 to 1800 the annual profits on the capital stock actually paid in were from sixty to seventy per cent.

In view of facts which are brought under our notice, this passing year, of the enterprise, prosperity, and rich prospects of the province of Manitoba, the present representative of the Red River Settlement, it is amusingly, even ludicrously suggestive of the blind with which ends of selfish policy will cover even the sharpest eyes, to read the testimony which the Bay Company offered to the parliamentary committee as to the fitness of any portions of its territories for colonies and agricultural settlements. One single plain question, straightly put and frankly answered, would have saved the space of many pages of examination, cross-examination, ingenious dodging, and equivocal assertions on the present record. That question as addressed to the company might have been this: Will the use to which you put your vast territories consist with any other use that would accrue to the advantage of any party besides the Hudson's Bay Company? The frank answer would have been No. The only suggestion which will save the credit of the company from just reflections upon the obstructive and misleading results to which it appeared to wish to lead the inquiry as to the qualities of soil and climate in its territories, is found in allowance for its long-indulged prejudices and prepossessions. Many hints are dropped, in the large class of books written by the employes of the Bay Company, that it discouraged any enterprises of tillage and even of garden culture about its posts. Where occasionally such oases appeared they are ascribed to the thrift or good taste of a factor, trader, or other officer.

Among those who took the stand before the committee, and who were sharply questioned on this point, were John Ross, Esq., Dr. J. Rae, Col. J. H. Lefroy, Sir George Simpson, Hon. Edward Ellice, and Sir John Richardson. They had each and all the best means of knowledge of the character and qualities of large sections of the expanded territories under the control of the company, while of course there were larger portions which were most imperfectly known; and each and all of them gave the most discouraging testimony concerning the inhospitality of the country, its uninviting character, its wide stretches of barrenness, its treacherous frosts, its dismal reaches of swamp and marsh, its treeless plains, and of the limitation of fertility to the near banks of rivers. Sir George Simpson, who in his long service of local governor had floated or tramped most widely over the country, pronounced its soil to be poor, its climate treacherous, and all its produce at the mercy of devastating inundations. This was said of the Red River Settlement and its surroundings. Richardson, the Arctic explorer, testified that the land was worthless for settlement, and he marvelled that it had ever been entered upon except for furs. Mr. Ellice affirmed that it was no place for agricultural settlers, and he volunteered to say the same of the border territory of Minnesota, now so luxuriant.

Strange enough is it to turn from these doleful judgments to the facts

verified and illustrated twenty-five years after the date of their utterance. The Red River Settlement, represented now by the province of Manitoba, is known as perhaps the richest wheat-growing country of the whole globe. Annual crops have been reaped in succession from its fields for sixty years, without the use of any fertilizers. The farmers have no use for the stable manure. Indeed, it was found necessary to pass an ordinance imposing a penalty of twenty-five dollars on any one who should pollute the river, as actually had been done by dumping into it the heaps of the barnyard. We read of sixty and seventy bushels of wheat grown to the acre; of single potatoes that weigh two pounds, and turnips twenty pounds; of squashes one hundred and thirty-eight pounds, and of cabbages five feet in girth. The region is in fact the bed of an old fresh-water sea that has gathered the loam and muck of ages. The extent of this fertile region is four hundred miles in length by seventy in breadth.<sup>1</sup>

Happily Mr. Gladstone was not convinced by the testimony offered that the vast territories held by the Bay Company were designed and adapted by Providence solely for a preserve for fur-bearing animals. He had satisfied himself that while the lands below the boundary line were being so rapidly and prosperously turned to account by the enterprise of settlers in the United States, it could not be that the blight of desolation and barrenness was visited on Rupert's Land. The result of the parliamentary inquiry was expressed in the acceptance of two resolutions, proposed by Mr. Gladstone: first, that the territory capable of colonization and settlement should be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the company; second, that the territory unsuited to such uses should remain under its jurisdiction. These resolutions were accompanied by a suggestion from the committee to the Bay Company that an amicable arrangement should be made for bringing the question of Canadian boundary lines before the judicial committee of the privy council. Governor Pelly, in behalf of the company, consented to the proposal, suggesting that due regard be had to keeping good faith with shareholders and with parties who had purchased lands of the company, and recognizing the just claims of factors, traders, and servants at its posts.

More than ten years were yet to pass before the final disposal of the controverted interests. New and very pressing elements came rapidly into the issue to compel decisive action. The claims of Canada for the extension of its bounds and the amazing vigor exhibited by the United States in the construction of transcontinental railroads brought out in strong contrast the strange arrest and prohibition of all like enterprise north of the boundary line. Emigration and colonization companies under British patronage stood ready to turn to account opportunities which seemed to invite and even

<sup>1</sup> [Fort Garry, for instance, is on the summer line of Vermont and New Hampshire. Cf. map of the Dominion of Canada, in A. T. Russell's *Red River Country* (Ottawa, 1869, and Montreal, 1870). The fertile belt, extending from the Lake of the Woods with a northerly sweep so as in

part to embrace the valleys of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan rivers and reaching to the Rocky Mountains, is shown in the map in the 2d vol. of H. Y. Hind's *Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857* (London, 1860). — Ed.]

to compel activity. Jealousy at the manifestation of a strong preference by British emigrants for settling in the United States came in as quite a potent motive for bringing the monopoly of the Bay Company to a close. As a result, an act was passed by the British Parliament in 1867, enabling the Queen to accept a surrender *on terms to be agreed upon*, of the lands, privileges, and rights of the company, and for transfer of territory and administration to the Dominion of Canada.<sup>1</sup> An act, designated the "Rupert's Land Act," had made it competent for the company to surrender, and for the Queen to accept, all the lands, privileges, rights, etc., granted to the company by its charter. An address from the Canadian Parliament to the Queen in council asked liberty to admit Rupert's Land and the Northwest territory to union with the Dominion, and power of legislation for them by the Parliament *on terms* hereafter.

The terms secured by the company were certainly of a most generous character, and are in keeping with the remarkable pecuniary profit which had attended its operations during the two centuries of its chartered existence. The company was still in its corporate capacity to be allowed to carry on its trade, and to be paid for its franchise the sum of £300,000 by the Canadian government. It was to retain the fee of all its posts and stations, with a reservation of an additional block of land at each of them, and one twentieth section of the so-called "fertile belt," to be decided by the casting of the lot. All titles of land that had been heretofore given by the company were to be confirmed, and the Canadian and imperial governments were to relieve it of all responsibility in settling the claims of the Indians. The reserved lands thus covenanted to the company make up in area 45,160 acres. Of these, 25,700 acres are in that marvellously rich territory of the "fertile belt," between the northern branch of the Saskatchewan and the boundary of the United States. The globe has no more teeming soil than is found there. And now the venerable Hudson Bay Company is a rival in the market as a land company! It is a curious and amusing spectacle to look at it in its present capacity, after having read the voluminous testimony before rehearsed as offered before the parliamentary committee, in the interest of the company, to prove that the territory was put to its best use by the Indian fur-hunter with his traps, and was worthless for all ends of husbandry and agriculture. Of course the grounds reserved by the company have acquired a vastly enhanced value, especially the five hundred acres near the site of old Fort Garry, in Winnipeg, the centre of life in the province of Manitoba.<sup>2</sup>

It is thought that the financial prosperity of the company in its present field of operations will even exceed that of any period in its past.

<sup>1</sup> *British Public Bills*, vol. ii. 1867-8.

<sup>2</sup> The parliamentary acts, with all the accompanying documents, schedules, etc., of this some-

what complicated negotiation are in the *London Gazette* of June 24, 1870.

## CRITICAL ESSAY ON THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

THE large body of narrative, descriptive, and controversial literature upon which the story of the preceding chapter is based may be divided into two classes. The one embraces the publications issued by the British government as containing the processes and results of official inquiries into the affairs and the administration of the Hudson Bay Company.<sup>1</sup> In those volumes we find the charter of the company;<sup>2</sup> the successive grants of privileges in territory not included in the charter; illustrative and explanatory documents; official correspondence, petitions, memorials, reports of committees of inquiry; the testimony of witnesses in complaint or defence; and a detail of the course through which, in the action of the imperial government and of the Dominion government of Canada, the territorial rights and administrative powers held by the Bay Company under its charter were surrendered on terms, including remuneration.

The volumes of *British Documents* which have furnished matter of information and illustration are the following:—

*Papers presented to the committee appointed to inquire into the state and condition of the countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay, and of the trade carried on there* (London, 1749); and the committee's *Report* (London, 1749). It is also in the *Reports from Committees, House of Commons*, vol. ii.

*Accounts and Papers*, vol. xxviii., 1842.<sup>3</sup>

*Accounts and Papers*, vol. xxxv., 1849.<sup>4</sup>

*Accounts and Papers*, vol. xxxviii., 1850.<sup>5</sup>

*Reports of Committees*, vol. xv., 1857.<sup>6</sup>

The last-named volume is wholly filled with a most minute inquiry into the administration of the Bay Company. The volumes by Mr. Martin and Mr. Fitzgerald, referred to further on, may be put in the class of authorities here noticed.<sup>7</sup>

The other class of publications, notices of many of which are to be given, are those of a descriptive or narrative character, as presenting the practical operations of the company

<sup>1</sup> This is the designation of the charter, and is the form followed in this essay, except where the other usage, Hudson's Bay Company, is quoted or occurs in a title.

<sup>2</sup> It is also given by Dobbs, by Mills (*Boundaries of Ontario*), and others. Cf. *Papers relating to the Hudson's Bay Company's charter and license to trade* (London, 1859); Martin's *Hudson's Bay Territories*; H. H. Bancroft's *Northwest Coast*, i. 470, etc.

<sup>3</sup> This contains *Hudson's Bay Company. Copy of the existing charter or grant by the Crown to the Hudson's Bay Company; together with copies or extracts of the correspondence which took place at the last renewal of the charter between the government and the company, or of individuals on behalf of the company; also, the dates of all former charters or grants to that company. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 8 August, 1842* (London, 1842).

<sup>4</sup> *Copies of Memorials of the Red River Settlement, complaining of the government of the Hudson's Bay Company; of instructions given to the Gov.-Gen. of Canada for the investigation of those complaints; of the Reports and Correspondence, ordered to be printed, 13 April, 1849.*

<sup>5</sup> *Papers presented to the House of Commons, in pursuance of an address, that means be taken to ascertain the legality of the powers in respect to territory, trade, taxation, and government, claimed or exercised by the Hudson's Bay Company. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 12 July, 1850.*

<sup>6</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, together with the proceedings of the committee, minutes of evidence, appendix, and Index* (London, 1857). This report is accompanied by three maps: one showing the watershed of Hudson's Bay (after Arrowsmith) as the territory claimed under the charter; a second denoting the boundaries of the regions occupied by the various Indian tribes north of the Gulf of Mexico; the third shows the country south, west, and north of Hudson's Bay, drawn by Thomas Devine, by order of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Joseph Canchon, Toronto, March, 1857.

<sup>7</sup> [Brymner (*Report on the Dominion Archives*, 1873) gives an account of his examination of the records of the company in London. In *Ibid.* 1883, p. 173, he prints an account of the transactions of the company in 1687.—ED.]



as administered by its officers and servants. Many of these volumes contain matters of criticism and complaint against the company, often severe, and as if written under a sense of personal grievances from it, as well as challenging its claims and assumed rights of monopoly. But the principal interest of this class of authorities is that which we look for in works of romantic adventure, scenes in wild life, events of exploration and residence, and the occupations and resources of men encountering perils in lonely travel, in the hunting and trapping expeditions, and the contact and intercommunion of savagery with civilization. As years pass on these volumes will acquire an increasing interest as keeping in remembrance scenes and incidents as well as persons and characters on this continent quite unlike their modern substitutes.

During more recent years many books coming under this class have been written by amateurs from the old world, who, from a love of wild adventure, of hunting, of sharing the Indian mode of life, or a desire to toughen themselves by hardships, have made transient visits to the American wildernesses. Noblemen and gentlemen are conspicuous on the lists, and their narrations are not lacking in the romantic or the marvellous. But far more comprehensive and communicative of authentic and interesting information is a successive series of works beginning with the early enterprises of the Hudson Bay Company, and written mainly by those who have been for long periods in its service, and who have artlessly, and often with graphic power, given to us their own experience. This covers the details of daily life and duty at the company's posts, long tramps on snowshoes and with dog-sledges over the frozen and snow-piled wilderness, and tortuous courses by lake, river, cascade, and portage, in summer days; the scenes of the camp, and the ways and doings of the Indians. As, in the rapid hurry of the swift years and the swifter rush of occupation and settlement by white men of the region which on the maps of the school-days of our present mature generation was named "The Great American Wilderness," towns and cities and all the concomitants of our artificial life obliterate the original features of nature, the books here referred to will have a retrospective and reconstructive use of the highest historical value. Our noblemen amateur hunters come with all the appliances and luxuries of civilization among their resources in luggage, fire-arms, cans and bottles, largely relieved of the rough and perilous conditions of the primeval scenes.

The historians of the Hudson Bay Company took those scenes as they found them. They were bright, intelligent, and truthful observers and narrators. Generally those who came here as the apprentices of the company were young Scotch peasants from the Orkneys, about seventeen years of age. They passed a close examination, mental, moral, and physical. They received twenty pounds a year, with sustenance. They were sent, on arrival, to the farthest posts, and were expected to devote their lives, with promotion in view, to the service, which many of them did.

The deprivations, hardships, and exposures incident to the mode of life of these young apprentices were in all cases real and severe. The romance attaching to them is rather in the reading about them than in facing them. The perusal of the personal narratives of these hardy and resolute adventurers, who generally wrote their pages in the gloomy scenes of their isolation, and to occupy listless hours, would lead to the inference, conformed to the usual workings of human nature, that the great law of compensatory offsets had full activity there. Many of these Scotch peasant youths were born to a hard and rough lot at home. Only the more manly and self-reliant of them would be likely to seek or to secure the opportunities of a wilderness exile in the service of the great fur company. We know that it was held as a coveted privilege among the adventure-loving and amphibious boys of a Highland nurture. Many of them have confessed the elation of spirits and the bursting sense of self-importance with which they strutted before their comrades when offered a place in the service. The hazardous sea-voyage, the first sight of the dismal inhospitality of the icy straits, the introduction to the scenes and companions of the rugged tasks before them, were at once followed by the demands of severe task-work under novel conditions. A single congenial mate in travel and toil smoothed

many a harsh experience, and the free revel of animal spirits gave a zest to perils and hardships.

It is to be frankly admitted that all the young, and with scarcely a single exception the older writers, who have given their experience in the service of the Bay Company, have bitterly complained of its dealings with them as mean and tyrannical.<sup>1</sup>

It does not appear that in any case either the foreign or the local administrators of the affairs of the company concerned themselves with replying to these assaults, or attempted to visit any penalty upon the authors. All its servants, and the youngest of them most rigidly, were held to the sole obligation of advancing the interests of the company in its giant monopoly, and in enabling it to return its fabulous dividends to its stockholders. The two main inspirations for courage, endurance, and business integrity which animated the young apprentice and cheered him in his lonely post were the prospect of promotion, in the method favored though not always pursued by the company, to the coveted positions of chief trader and chief factor, after fifteen, twenty, or more years of service as a clerk, and the crowning of his one hope of being able to return as a man of substance and spend his leisure days in his early home. Of course there was always a fluttering of spirits in these subordinates when the annual council at Norway or York post was making its deal of assignments and positions. The few rather than the many found reason to be content with the unalterable allotments, and there was nothing to be done but to resume the routine of tasks. As to the other alleviation found in the hope and purpose of a homeward return with the rewards of a competency, it is safe to say that in a large majority of cases the intent had weakened and lost its attractions when it might have been realized. The cases, indeed, were exceptional in which those who had lived many years in the service of the Bay Company returned to the old civilized scenes and ways. With the marvellous potency of the needful adaptations and habits of wholly new and strange ways of life in its vigorous period, to substitute a second nature for that in which one was born and early trained, the round of experience and the companionship in the wilderness had a strangely fascinating influence. To endure existence under its necessary conditions, it was essential to make the most and the best of them. And exactly as one became conformed to them there grew upon him a preference for them. The voracious appetite acquired by rough exposure gave to wilderness viands and cookery a quality of luxury. One who was used to having the whole air of heaven to breathe, and the whole hemisphere as a canopy for his couch, whose toilet was of the simplest, and who was wonted to the freedom of the forests and the rivers, gradually lost his fitness and his tolerance for the conventionalities, the fashions, and the appliances of artificial life. Family relationships formed in the wilderness, with partners of pure or mingled blood, while they may have generally been loose and readily disposed of, were not infrequently comfortably and faithfully sustained for life. Occasionally the children of such a parentage were sent to Canada or England for education. In the mean while the long years of forest life which had resulted in this transforming process for the Scotch youth had wrought their changes in the scenes and generations of his early home. He did not care to see it

<sup>1</sup> "The history of my career may serve as a warning to those who may be disposed to enter the Hudson's Bay Company's service. They may learn that from the moment they embark in the company's canoes at Lachine, or in their ships at Gravesend, they bid adieu to all that civilized man most values on earth. They bid adieu to their family and friends, probably forever; for if they should remain long enough to attain the promotion that allows them the privilege of revisiting their native land — a period of from twenty to twenty-five years — what changes does not this life exhibit in a much shorter time? They bid adieu to all the comforts and conven-

iences of civilized life, to vegetate at some desolate, solitary post, hundreds of miles, perhaps, from any other human habitation save the wigwam of the savage; without any other society than that of their own thoughts, or of the two or three humble individuals who share their exile. They bid adieu to all the refinement and cultivation of civilized life, not unfrequently becoming semi-barbarians, — so altered in habits and sentiments that they not only become attached to savage life, but eventually lose all relish for any other." (*Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory*, by John McLean (London, 1849), ii. 260.)

again. When, as we shall note, an agricultural settlement was made within the territory of the company, many of its servants and officers retired with a competency, and found congenial homes where a forest tramp, hunting and fishing expeditions, and converse with successors in their old occupations led them to the natural close of their career.

The names given to some of the most distant and dreary of the northern posts of the company, on Mackenzie's River and the Great Slave Lake, seemed to have been intended to keep up the spirits of their occupants. Thus we have "Providence," "Reliance," "Resolution," "Enterprise," "Good Hope," and "Confidence." The narrations of the modes of travel and intercourse by which these and other widely separated posts were reached, their supplies furnished, and the returns gathered from and to the shipping points in the bay, were the first matters of interest for the apprentices, and are given with charming fullness of detail and incident in their journals. The admirable facilities for transit furnished by the water-ways of lake and river were availed of alike by the natives and the Europeans, and were best improved when they were in company. The ascent of a river to the lake from which it flowed, the skirting of that lake till it led to another river which discharged into it, with the interspersions of carrying-places, gave variety to the route.

Conspicuous, and among the earliest of these descriptive books,<sup>1</sup> is Arthur Dobbs's *Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay, in the Northwest Part of America, etc.* (London, 1744),<sup>2</sup> which was written in very earnest support of the probability of a northwest passage, and in advocacy of renewed efforts to search for it. Parliament had offered a reward of £20,000 to whoever might discover it. Mr. Dobbs's work was of importance, because the grievances of which he and his associates in a voyage of discovery complained, and the charges brought by them against the obstructing influence of the Hudson Bay Company, were the grounds of a petition to the Lords in Council, in 1749, against its monopoly. The petitioners insist that the company's charter was either from

<sup>1</sup> [One of our sources for earlier glimpses of the Hudson Bay region are the missionary accounts in such collections as the *Lettres Ecrites des Missions Etrangères* (1650-1750, in 47 vols.). There is a selection in Kip's *Hist. Scenes from the old Jesuit Missions*, and particularly in his *Early Jesuit Missions in North America*. The early geographical history of Hudson's Bay is traced *ante*, Vol. III. On early complaints by the company of French encroachments, see Brymner's *Report on the Dominion Archives*, 1883, extracting from vol. 96 of the *Plantations General* of the Public Record Office in London. — Ed.]

<sup>2</sup> [The title of the book is much longer (cf. Pilling's *Eskimo Bibliog.*, p. 23). The book includes an abstract of the journal of Capt. Christopher Middleton, who commanded the "Fur-nace," "with observations on his behavior" during this voyage for the discovery of a passage to the South Seas. In these Middleton was charged with a collusion with the Hudson Bay Company to prevent any successful efforts to effect such a discovery. This led to a pamphlet war. Middleton published a *Vindication of his Conduct* (Dublin, 1744), in which he gave his instructions, "with as much of the log journal as relates to the discovery." Dobbs then published

*Remarks upon Capt. Middleton's Defence* (London, 1744), in which he says that there is the "highest probability that there is such a passage as he went in search of." Middleton printed *A Reply to the Remarks* (London, 1744), and again *Forgery Detected* (London, 1745). Dobbs responded in *A Reply to Capt. Middleton's Answer to the Remarks* (London, 1745), in which he charges Middleton with laying down false currents, tides, straits, and rivers in his chart and journal to conceal the discovery; and appends a specific answer to his *Forgery Detected*. The captain closed the warfare with a *Rejoinder* (London, 1745). All these titles are given at length in *Carter-Brown*, iii. (in this order), nos. 766, 774, 767, 775, 798, 803, 804.

This old controversy has been summarized in John Barrow's introduction to *The geography of Hudson's Bay: the remarks of William Coats in voyages between 1727 and 1751. With appendix containing the log of Capt. Middleton on his voyage for the discovery of the north-west passage, 1741-2* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1852), in which that editor holds that subsequent explorations have proved Middleton's representations to be correct, and that his correspondence preserved at the Admiralty makes clear Middleton's straightforwardness. — Ed.]

the first invalid, or is forfeited by the way in which it has been used to obstruct the very objects it was intended to advance. They ask for an incorporation giving them similar rights over the region adjacent to that granted to the company for the purpose of advancing discovery and trade. As has been said in the previous pages, this, like all the other public impeachments of the company, failed of its object.<sup>1</sup> The following extract will show the frankness and force of Mr. Dobbs's charges:—

"The reason why the manner of living there at present appears to be so dismal to us in Britain is entirely owing to the monopoly and avarice of the Hudson's Bay Company (not to give it a harsher name), who, to deter others from trading there or making settlements, conceal all the advantages to be made in that country, and give out that the climate and country and passage thither are much worse and more dangerous than they really are, and vastly worse than might be, if those seas were more frequented, and proper settlements and improvements were made, and proper situations chosen for that purpose; this they do that they may engross a beneficial trade to themselves, and therefore oblige their captains not to make any charts or journals that may discover those seas or coasts, in order to prevent others from sailing to their factories. They also prevent their servants from giving any account of the climate or countries adjacent, that might be favorable, and induce others to trade and settle there; nor do they encourage their servants, or even allow them, to make any improvements without their factories, unless it be a turnip garden; confining them all the summer season, during the time of the Indian trade, within their factories, lest they should trade by stealth with the natives," etc. (pp. 2 and 3).

Mr. Dobbs makes public many interesting particulars concerning the zeal and prosperity of the French in the fur trade, as far surpassing and encroaching upon those of the company. He derived his information from Joseph la France, "a French Canadese Indian, who for more than thirty years had traversed the region of the lakes, and had tramped to York Fort."<sup>2</sup>

We may appreciate the interest and influence which the monopolizing company could bring to bear in resisting the force of these numerous and severe complaints against it, so far as to retain its charter.

A popular book in its day was Henry Ellis's *Voyage to Hudson's Bay, by the Dobbs Galley and California, in the years 1746 and 1747, for discovering a Northwest Passage, etc.* (London, 1748). The very intelligent, able, and candid author of this volume was an earnest believer in the existence of and the possibility of opening the way to a northwestern water route through America to India. He tells us that he happened to return to England from Italy only four days before the actual sailing of two vessels, lying in the Thames, which had been provided by a company of subscribers to go on the search. So ardent was his zeal and so strong the interest which he made with the proprietors, that only a few hours before the departure he was allowed to embark in an office of trust and honor. He devotes a hundred pages of his volume to a résumé of the history of all previous voyages in the attempts to find the desired passage. He then gives an admi-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *A short narrative and justification of the Proceedings of the Committee appointed by the adventurers to prosecute the discovery of the passage to the Western Ocean of America, and to open and extend the trade and settle the countries beyond Hudson's Bay, with an apology for their postponing at present their intended application to Parliament* (London, 1749); and *A Short State of the Countries and Trade of North America claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company, under pretence of a charter* (London, 1749).

See other tracts named in the *Carter-Brown Catalogue*, nos. 914-15.

<sup>2</sup> [Dobbs's map is entitled: *A new map of part*

*of North America, including the late discoveries made on board the Furnace Bomb Ketch in 1742, and the western rivers and lakes falling into Nelson's River in Hudson's Bay, as described by Joseph La France, a French Canadese Indian, who traveled through those countries and lakes for three years, from 1737 to 1740.*

It gives a conjectural unknown coast from Cape Blanco (California) to the northwest corner of Hudson's Bay. Cf. on the relations of the French to the fur trade, 1524-1763, H. H. Bancroft's *Northwest Coast*, i. 378, 395, 404, 437, 482, 504, 535, 541, 547, 591. — ED.]

table sketch from a carefully prepared journal of his own expedition, which, though it failed of its object, did not in the least impair his confidence in it or his belief that it would ultimately be realized. His party, with the two vessels, wintered in Hayes River, near York Fort. It is in connection with this incident that the author, in a spirit of great frankness and with the statement of discreditable facts, though in carefully measured terms and language, arraigns the conduct of the agent of the Hudson Bay Company at the fort for truculency and hostility, as having no interest in, but rather opposing the designs of Mr. Ellis's expedition, notwithstanding its high patronage. He very fairly raises the question, whether the company should retain a charter privilege granted in the interest of discovery, if there is reason for regarding such discovery as hopeless, or if efforts in its behalf are to be withstood. The commander of the fort stoutly opposed the anchoring of the vessels anywhere in proximity. He then tried to compel their lying below the fort, open to the sea, where they would have been knocked to pieces. When he found the officers were determined to anchor in Hayes River, he forbade his Indian servants to furnish them with fresh provisions during their fearful winter sufferings with scurvy.

Joseph Robson, who had been surveyor and supervisor of the buildings of the company, offered a very severe arraignment of its narrow measures and selfishness in an *Account of Six Years' Residence in Hudson's Bay, from 1733 to 1736 and 1744 to 1747, containing a variety of Facts, Observations, and Discoveries, etc.* (London, 1752).<sup>1</sup> The author shows that positive obstructions, bugbears, and prohibitions were used to prevent all efforts for penetrating into the country and using the facilities of the waterways. He himself made such efforts, notwithstanding strong opposition. He addresses himself to the Earl of Halifax, of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, urging the vast importance to Great Britain of breaking a rigid monopoly, and of offering national encouragement in laying open the trade to rich territories and keeping them out of the hands of the French. He reminds the earl that, in view of these vast interests, a petition had gone to Parliament in 1749 from the chief trading cities and towns in Great Britain against the company's charter. He himself was one of those who were called to give testimony in the hearing. The company brought in defence only garbled extracts from documents and papers. He says the French have won great prizes from the sluggishness of the company. "The company have for eighty years slept at the edge of a frozen sea: they have shown no curiosity to penetrate farther themselves, and have exerted all their art and power to crush that spirit in others." They have prevented all friendly intercourse with the natives, and the acquisition of their language. They have discouraged all use of the rich fisheries, all mining enterprises, and all projects for settling colonies. The annual export is of less than £5,000, in but three or four vessels, under two hundred tons each. Four small factories and two small houses, served by one hundred and fifty men, stand at the mouths of frozen rivers, with temperate and fruitful countries, south of them, neglected. The Indians are left in the rudest barbarity. In an appendix to the volume is an account of the discovery of the bay and the proceedings of the British there.

It was in 1769-1772 that Samuel Hearne made his explorations for the company, but his narrative was not published till twenty years later, as a *Journey from Prince of Wales Fort to the Northern Ocean* (London, 1795; Dublin, 1796); and then, by its denial of any motive and act of the company to check exploration, it served as an offset to the most severe criticism which came from any one who had been in the company's service, and which appears in Edward Umfreville's *Present State of Hudson's Bay, containing a full description of that settlement, etc.* (London, 1790). He had been for eleven years in the company's service and for four years in the Canada fur trade, and he finds grounds in his own observation and experience for grave censures upon it. Yet he does not write as from personal vindictiveness or with any asperity. He addresses himself to the mer-

<sup>1</sup> Carter-Brown Catalogue, iii. no. 986.



PRINCE OF WALES FORT.

chants, traders, and manufacturers of Great Britain, to expose to them the loss and injury suffered by the country by the management of a selfish and greedy monopoly. He refers to the skilful ingenuity of the company in repressing the investigation of its affairs and averting the annihilation of its charter, for which Arthur Dobbs and other gentlemen had petitioned the House of Commons in 1749. The writer entered the service of the company as a clerk, on a salary of fifteen pounds, in 1771, and continued in it for eleven years. When La Perouse captured the two principal forts in 1782, he was made a prisoner, and afterwards left the service of the company on a disagreement about salary. For the four following years he was engaged in the Canada fur trade under a rival company, the greater shrewdness and prosperity of which he emphasizes. The Bay Company, he says, might offer profitable employment to idle British laborers and seamen. It confines itself to a dismal coast, instead of penetrating a far more attractive interior. It employs only three vessels, whose whole burden is not six hundred tons, with seventy-five mariners. It has but two hundred and forty resident employees. It artfully represents the country as harsh and inhospitable. It has diminished the number of natives and debased them by intoxicating liquor.<sup>1</sup> He admits that the first traders acted humanely under instructions from the company for the considerate treatment of the Indians, but since then the greed of trade has overcome all other motives.<sup>2</sup> In 1749 the stock of the company, swollen from the original capital of £10,500, represented £103,950. Of the one hundred proprietors, seventeen were women, by inheritance.

Umfreville was present at the surrender of forts Churchill and York to La Perouse in 1782, and probably furnished to the *London Morning Chronicle* for April of the next year the account of the transactions which he copies in his volume. After the cession of Canada, its residents, becoming British subjects, asserted their rights of trade against the monopoly of the company, and an intense rivalry began. The Canadian partners had a thousand men in their employ, and sent annually forty large laden canoes into the Indian country, where the Bay Company might have anticipated them. It was not till more than a century after the date of its charter that the company struck into the interior. The Canadian traders were rough, unscrupulous, and demoralized. The servants of the company were far superior in character to the half-breed voyageurs.

This rival Northwest Company of Canada in its turn recognized the demand for exploration in sending Alexander Mackenzie on his two tours of observation, the experiences of which are recounted in his *Voyage from Montreal to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, 1789-1793* (London, 1801; Philadelphia, 1802; New York, 1814), a synopsis of which is given by Bancroft.<sup>3</sup>

In the *Narrative of a Voyage to Hudson's Bay in his Majesty's Ship Rosamond, etc., by Lieut. Edward Chappell, R. N.* (London, 1817), we have the record<sup>4</sup> of an officer on a British government ship which convoyed two vessels of the Hudson Bay Company to York factory, during the war, in 1814. He was young, but a quick and intelligent observer. In his journal he gives much curious information concerning the Eskimos. He describes the six coast and river forts of the company at the time, namely, Churchill, York, Severn, Moose, Albany, East Main, beside Richmond, a minor establishment. He comments sharply on the illiberal policy of the company in shrouding its affairs in darkness, and discouraging all enterprises of exploration and the fisheries. It holds in secrecy, he affirms, all the knowledge it obtains about the navigation of the northern seas, and has even supplied the Admiralty with an incorrect chart. The fort at Churchill, which had been partially reconstructed after its destruction by La Perouse in 1782, was again ruined by a conflagration in November, 1813. The occupants, at the peril of their lives, saved seventy-three chests of gunpowder. All else was destroyed, causing intense

<sup>1</sup> [See references on this point in H. H. Bancroft's *Northwest Coast*, i. 547. — ED.]

<sup>2</sup> [A comparison of the methods of treatment of the natives as pursued by the Hudson Bay

Company and the Northwest Company is made in *Ibid.* i. ch. 17. — ED.]

<sup>3</sup> *Northwest Coast*, i. ch. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Edited by Edward Daniel Clarke.

suffering by exposure and famine to the houseless victims, the thermometer being seventy-eight degrees below the freezing-point.<sup>1</sup>

In the hearing of evidence before the parliamentary committee in 1857, concerning charges alleged against the Hudson Bay Company, some of the witnesses testified that John Dunn had written his *Oregon Territory and the British North American fur trade* (London, 1844; Philadelphia, 1845) with a view to defending and eulogizing the company. His book, certainly, in its general tone and pleading, and its selection of points for emphatic statement, seems to justify that charge. He was articled as an apprentice in the service of the company, and placed for a year as assistant storekeeper in Fort Vancouver. He was then sent as travelling, trading, and exploring agent, and acted as interpreter, and having assisted in establishing several new posts, was put in charge of Fort George, near the mouth of the Columbia. Returning after eight years to England, he communicated to the *Times* and other journals, in 1843, papers bearing upon the Oregon question between the United States and Britain. He assumes that he presents impartially the respective claims, and the grounds of them, of the two countries. But he is bitterly contemptuous to the United States, charging it with cunning and duplicity, and representing its citizens, and even American missionaries, as laying artful plans to secure possession of territory really belonging to Britain. Incidentally, Mr. Dunn gives much information concerning the operations of the Bay Company, and the condition of several Indian tribes.

*The Life and Travels of Thomas Simpson, the Arctic Discoverer* (London, 1845) was written by Alexander Simpson, as a tribute of affection for a brother, a man of a noble, lovable, and heroic character, who midway in a great career came to a melancholy death, in his thirty-second year. The book is written in a spirit of wounded feeling and sharp censoriousness. The brothers were both in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company. Sir George Simpson, the local governor, was an illegitimate son of their mother's brother. From this relative, their superior in office, the brothers do not appear to have received any kindly consideration in their treatment, still less any favor. They both regarded him as selfish, jealous, and capable of duplicity. Thomas Simpson made two hazardous tours of exploration, and thought that he had discovered the long-desired passage between the western and the eastern oceans. His account of his travels — the manuscript, as his brother charges, having been jealously concealed and tampered with — was not published till 1843, three years after his death.<sup>2</sup> The government had assigned to him a pension of £100. His brother sought, four years after Thomas's death, to secure this for the heirs. But though he solicited Sir Robert Peel, and engaged on his side the good offices of the explorer Barrows, he did not succeed in his effort. The reason for the denial was that Thomas Simpson was not in the employ of the government, but in that of the Hudson Bay Company. This company made no reply to the brother's request for aid.

In order to promote the petition of the Hudson Bay Company for the planting of a colony under its auspices and control in Vancouver's Island, R. M. Martin published his *Hudson Bay Territories and Vancouver's Island, with an exposition of the chartered rights, conduct, and policy of the Honble Hudson's Bay Corporation* (London, 1849), dedicating it to an advocate of the scheme, Earl Gray, the colonial secretary. Many of Martin's statements were at once challenged as incorrect, and written under a bias. He describes the territories under the control of the company, gives details of its constitution and working, stoutly maintains its good management and efficiency, and argues for its special fitness and qualifications to lead and manage the proposed colony. He also presents statements of the numbers, character, and treatment by the company of the aboriginal tribes. The volume contains a copy of the draft charter for the colony, which was essentially modified before its passage.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas McKeevor's *Voyage to Hudson's Bay during the summer of 1812* (London, 1819, — being a part of vol. ii. of *New Voyages and Travels*, London).

<sup>2</sup> *Narrative of the Discoveries on the North Coasts of America, effected by the Officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1836-1839* (London, 1843).



The sentiment of opposition to this Vancouver scheme of the company was vigorously expressed in *An Examination of the Charter and Proceedings of the Hudson's Bay Company, with reference to the Grant of Vancouver's Island*. By James Edward Fitzgerald (London, 1849). The quotation from Tacitus on the title-page, of "*Ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant*," indicates the severity of the author's judgment against the policy and influence of the monopolizing company. The work is dedicated to Mr. Gladstone. When the proposition for this additional charter was before Parliament, Mr. Gladstone opposed it in a very able speech, arraigning the course of the company. Mr. Fitzgerald writes earnestly and ably in the same spirit of opposition, with much severity of criticism, exposure, and censure of the company. He addresses himself in the main to controverting the book by Mr. R. M. Martin, which he regards as of a "palpably official character" in the interest of the company, wrought from documents furnished by it and obtained from the government. He argues against the validity of the charter, exposes the selfishness and greed of the company acting under it, as it had failed of its main pretences of exploring the country and improving the condition of the Indians, and traces the injurious influence and results of its spirit and operations upon the interests of the mother country, upon the native Indian population, and upon those who have attempted to plant colonies under it. The work is candid and well authenticated in its statements, and had a damaging effect upon the company.

John McLean, in his *Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory* (London, 1849), writes frankly and in guarded terms, and is one of that class who, in relating their own experience as servants of the Bay Company, pass a very severe judgment upon its policy and its treatment of those who are in its service in the most arduous though most humble posts of duty. The writer entered upon that service in 1820, just before the coalition with the Northwest Company, so that he had to contend in his place with opposition from it, as also afterwards with individual free-traders. He served at posts most widely separated in distance, as in New Caledonia and in Labrador, as well as in many intermediate ones. His journeys to and fro involved hair-breadth perils with sharp deprivations. The writer, by printing the full evidence of it, makes it plain that Governor Simpson, influenced by favoritism, broke faith with him when, by full service, he was entitled to promotion, and drove him to retire in disgust. Here is his frank statement:—

"This last act of the governor made me completely disgusted with a service where such acts would be tolerated. In no colony subject to the British crown is there to be found an authority so despotic as is at this day exercised in the mercantile colony of Rupert's Land: an authority combining the despotism of military rule with the strict surveillance and mean parsimony of the avaricious trader. From Labrador to Nootka Sound, the unchecked, uncontrolled will of a single individual gives law to the land. As to the nominal council which is yearly convoked for form's sake, the few individuals who compose it know better than to offer advice where none would be accepted; they know full well that the governor has already determined on his own measures before one of them appears in his presence. Their assent is all that is expected of them, and that they never hesitate to give." (Vol. ii. 235.)

We find in John Ryerson's *Hudson's Bay: or a Missionary Tour in the Territory of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto, 1855) a body of letters written by a Wesleyan missionary in his visits (1854-55) to some of the stations under the support of his religious organization. The writer has but little to say about any important results reached by religious efforts among the natives, but he finds satisfaction in some gleams of hope from the efforts of faithful laborers.<sup>1</sup> He gives incidentally fragments of interesting information of the operations of the Bay Company, from whose officers and servants he

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Journal of Peter Jacobs, Indian Wesleyan account of his life, and a short History of the Missionary, from Rice Lake to the Hudson's Bay Wesleyan Mission in that country* (New York, territory. Commencing May, 1852. With a brief 1857).

received courtesy and hospitality. His route was wholly by the watercourses. He sets down minute details of distances, portages, camping-places, and the incidents of travel, of life at the posts which he visited, and of the efforts of garden and field culture. He speaks kindly of the company, its methods and conduct.

The history of Lord Selkirk's settlement down to 1852 is covered in Alexander Ross's *The Red River Settlement: its Rise, Progress, and present State. With some account of the Native Races and its general history to the present day* (London, 1856). The writer was at an early age in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company at a post deep in the wilderness, and after many years of service took up his residence in the settlement where he has held prominent and honored positions, highly respected and confided in. Most intelligently and impartially does he trace the history and development of the colony from its troubled and distracted beginnings to the comparative prosperity which it reached. It had not, however, come to the end, either of its internal or its external conflicts, when he closed his work. With some few exceptional strictures, he in general terms approves the policy and conduct of the Bay Company. While expressing his belief that Mr. Isbister, in his sharp controversy with the company, was betrayed by the unfounded representations of his countrymen, he speaks in the highest terms of respect of that gentleman for his personal excellence and humanity. Very full, interesting, and trustworthy accounts are given in the volume of the good and the ill conditions mixed in the settlement; its resources and prospects; of its agricultural and social life; of the native tribes around it, and of the stirring hunting expeditions.<sup>1</sup> Especially sagacious and practical are the views of the author about the contentions of religious sects and the necessity that civilization should precede "conversion."

Of Robert Michael Ballantyne's sprightly and entertaining *Hudson's Bay: or every-day life in the Wilds of North America, during six years' residence in the Territories of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company* (London, 3d ed., 1857) there have been repeated editions. The writer describes himself to have been in his Highland home in 1841, when he was thrilled with joy on his appointment as an apprentice clerk in the service of the Hudson Bay Company. Robust and vigorous in constitution and animated in spirits, he entered with full zest into the conditions and duties of his office, with its tasks and hardships, and found full enjoyment in its rude relaxations. Making many long journeys by boats in the open season and with dog-sledges in the winter, he describes with minuteness of detail all the methods of travel, the smooth and the rough passages, the toil over the portages, the shooting of rapids, the trailing or dragging of boats up cascades by cheery voyageurs having but a slippery footing on precipitous banks; the coming in to the posts of the wild bands of boisterous Indians, their women, children, and dogs, with furs and hides, and the opening riot of intoxication, the method of trade, the giving forth of supplies, and the return of quiet; the gay scenes of half-breed life, the dance and the wedding. On his homeward way the writer went by Lake Superior and the old Canadian posts to Quebec and Tadousac, a journey of many hardships and romantic incidents.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Joseph James Hargrave was evidently an intelligent observer and candid reporter of matters which came under his own knowledge during his seven years' residence in the Dominion province now called Manitoba. He traces in his *Red River* (Montreal, 1871) the history of the Red River settlement from its origin under Lord Selkirk, and gives a sufficiently full statement of the disasters, sufferings, and finally the limited prosperity

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also his *Fur Hunters of the Far West* (London, 1855).

<sup>2</sup> As illustrating other adventures of this period, cf. Archibald McDonald's *Peace River, a canoe voyage from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific* (Ottawa, 1872), and the publication by Viscount Milton and Dr. Wm. B. Cheadle, called *The Northwest Passage by Land. Being the Narrative of an Expedition from the Atlantic to the Pacific* (London, 1865). The route followed was down the Red River to Fort Garry, hence through British Columbia. The writers both wield a ready and lively pen, sketching many striking scenes, with incidents of perilous adventure, strange companionships, hunting expeditions, and camp-life.

which it had reached at the time of his visit. It will be remembered that the settlement was the scene of the sharpest rivalry and contests, involving a great loss of life, between the opposing parties of the Hudson Bay and the Northwest Companies. Notwithstanding its chartered privileges and its position and resources on the spot, the Bay Company was the loser in that strife. The period of Mr. Hargrave's residence was between 1861 and 1869. The volume will always be of high historical value, because it so faithfully describes and comments upon scenes and occurrences which have so rapidly changed on the panorama of the past. The community which he portrays was a strangely heterogeneous one, bringing together people of many nationalities, of various mixtures of blood, and many of whom appeared during the year in the three characters of farmers, fishermen, and hunters.

In 1873, the investigation over the bounds of the province of Ontario led to two treatises, both of which are retrospective in their historical bearing. In David Mills' *Boundaries of Ontario* (Toronto, 1873), the second part is given to a historical summary of the French and English contests for the possession of Hudson's Bay from 1670 to the treaty of Utrecht; while a sketch of the early rivalry of the French and English in securing the fur trade is found in Charles Lindsey's *Investigations of the unsettled Boundaries of Ontario* (Toronto, 1873).<sup>1</sup>

In *The Great Lone Land: A Narrative of Travel and Adventure in the Northwest of America* (London, 1873), Captain W. F. Butler relates the occasion of his first range of distant travel in the Northwest. His errand into the country was induced by an official connection with the military expedition which went from Canada to suppress the revolt of the French half-breeds, under the "Dictator" Louis Riel, in 1869-1870, when the Red River settlement was made over from the control of the Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada. He passed through the United States, and anticipated for several months the arrival of the military force which came by the old Canadian route. He himself had some stirring adventures. Being on the spot, a keen, intelligent, and impartial observer, he gives us a most graphic account of the revolt, which threatened to be very serious in its origin and progress, but which ended in an absurd and inglorious discomfiture. Intending to return after this affair, he found himself invested with some judicial functions and the power of conferring them on others. He was thus led to make an expedition through the Saskatchewan Valley all the way to the company's post at the Mountain House, meeting with all the wild experiences of free adventure. He was an intrepid traveller, heroic and enduring, and his pages are vigorously written. He received the hospitalities of the company's officers and posts, and he passes no strictures on its policy. He traversed regions in which the natives had been wellnigh extirpated by an appalling visitation of the smallpox, which had also been severe in its ravages at some of the posts. He took with him large supplies of medical stores and directions for treating the disease. He is an ardent champion of the native qualities and the rights of the red man in his ever-ruinous contact with the whites.

A year later, Captain Butler, in his *Wild North Land, being the story of a winter journey with dogs across northern North America* (London, 1874), gives a delightful and instructive narrative of another expedition in the wilderness. This was wholly of a private nature, and was prompted by the spirit of adventure, made more exciting by its previous indulgence. His wanderings this time were principally on foot. He started from the Red River in the autumn of 1872, and in March following reached Lake Athabasca. Then he followed the winding Peace River to the Rocky Mountains, and through the north of British Columbia and New Caledonia, coming out on Fraser's River in June. His transient stops at the posts of the Bay Company, his sketches of the articles in which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Statutes, documents, and papers bearing on the discussion respecting the northern and western boundaries of Ontario, including the principal evidence supposed to be for or against the Province* (Toronto, 1878). *Correspondence, papers, and documents, 1856-1882, relating to the northerly and westerly boundaries of Ontario* (Toronto, 1882).

it trafficked, and his account of the wonderful mail-carriage in its semi-annual expeditions, furnish many lively and entertaining sketches.

The Earl of Southesk was substantially the guest of the Bay Company in 1859 and 1860, when he made the journey described in his *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains, A Diary and Narrative of Travel, Sport, and Adventure, during a Journey through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories* (Edinburgh, 1875). He had been promised its aid and furtherance as an inducement to his trip, and he received from it all needed help. As the title of the book shows, he was an amateur explorer and huntsman, with the spirit of free adventure. He describes with vividness and geniality the incidents of travel and the camp, and adds many interesting facts about the natural history of the region, its wild animals and the natives, giving us many sketches from his own pencil.<sup>1</sup>

We find quite as much a summary of existing knowledge as of personal observation and experience in H. M. Robinson's *Great Fur Land, or Sketches of Life in the Hudson's Bay Territory. With numerous Illustrations from Designs by Charles Gasche* (New York, 1879). The book is written with much vivacity, and will have a charming interest for readers who seek for romantic narrative and sketches of wild life. He gives us very full particulars about the more recent operations and government of the Hudson Bay Company, without any reflections on its policy or administration, generally commending it for fairness and for wise and kindly dealing with the Indians. He presents with great vividness the scenes and conditions of life; the characters and habits of red men, white men, half-breeds, voyageurs, hunters, and traders; the modes of travelling by canoe or dog-sledges; life in the company's posts in summer and winter; the hunting expeditions; methods of trapping; accounts of the fur trade; a winter camp; the gayeties of wild festive scenes among the half-breeds; the mode in which traffic is carried on, and some statistics of the peltries.

George C. Ellis.

<sup>1</sup> The reader may note some incongruity in the contents of the volume, as he finds in the appendix much miscellaneous matter on which the writer employed his mind in intervals of rest. For example, we have remarks on "The Winter's Tale," "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Merchant of Venice," "Othello," "Comments on a Sermon," "Reflections on Patience and God's Providence," "Comments on Bunsen's Hippolytus," etc.

#### EDITORIAL NOTE.

THE official and personal writings which have thus been surveyed involve, of course, the details of the history of the Hudson's Bay Company. Synoptical surveys of this history, with the extension of their field through the Indian territory and to the Pacific, will be found in H. H. Bancroft's *Northwest Coast* (ch. 14, etc.), and in Barrows's *Oregon* (ch. 6 and 12), where are particularly contrasted the opposing systems of settlement and of the trade for furs as brought into rivalry, to the advantage of the former in the saving of Oregon to the American Union (see *ante*, Vol. VII.). Bancroft gives a separate chapter (ch. 15) to collating the evidence about "Ports and Fort Life." All general histories of Canada and of Arctic exploration necessarily touch the subject. The best bibliography of the company's history can be picked out of the list of publications prefixed by Bancroft to his *Northwest Coast*. Some of the less important ones are grouped together in his vol. i. p. 457. Cf. also the section on Hudson's Bay in Chavanne's *Literatur über die Polar-Regionen* (Vienna, 1874). The bibliography of the explorations in the Northwest may be primarily followed in Bryce's paper on "Journeys in Rupert's Land," in the *Trans. Roy. Soc. Canada*, 1886. The mass of periodical literature can be gleaned through *Poole's Index*, p. 611, and *Supplement*, — the best condensation of the history being found perhaps

in the *Westminster Review* (July, 1867), on "The last great monopoly."<sup>1</sup> There is an enumeration of the typical maps of the Hudson Bay region in Winsor's *Kohl Collection of Maps*, section iv.

No. 6 of the *Papers of the Manitoba Hist. Soc.* is devoted to the sources of the history of the Canadian Northwest. As regards the respective rights of the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies to the trade of the Winnipeg country, the question turned upon the validity of the parliamentary grant to the Hudson's Bay Company for an extension of their trade westerly of Rupert's Land, as against the rights inherited, or assumed by the Canadians as accruing by the accession of the rights of France, through exploration, before the cession of the country and its advantages to England by the Peace of Paris (1763). But the Hudson's Bay Company also claimed to have preceded the French in this region, by sending through it a young explorer, Henry Kelsey, in 1690.<sup>2</sup> Vérandrye's explorations in 1731-49 were the earliest for the French (see references, *ante*, Vol. V. 567-8). La Franche first explored the route between Lake Superior and Hudson's Bay, 1738-42. For a summary of overland explorations from 1640 to 1786, see ch. 19 of Bancroft's *Northwest Coast*, vol. i. The *London Mag.* in 1761 gave a map of the straits of St. Mary and Michillimackinac to show the situation and importance of the two westernmost settlements of Canada for the fur trade.

The history of the North West Company, formed at Montreal in 1787 by uniting various trading interests, can be followed in *The origin and progress of the Northwest Company of Canada, with a history of the fur trade, as connected with that concern* (London, 1811). Up to this time the main features of their career had been their occupation of the Red River district in 1788; the explorations of Mackenzie in their interest in 1789; the secession of the X Y Company, in 1796; its reunion with the parent body in 1804; the contract with the Astor people in 1810; their building their first fort on the Columbia in 1811. They bought out the Astoria post in 1813. The book just cited has a map exhibiting the principal trading stations of the Northwest Company; and another map, showing these stations, with the routes of the traders from Fort William, on Lake Superior, is given in Alexander M'Donell's *Narrative of Transactions in the Red River Country* (London, 1819). The issue between the rival companies came with the grant to the Earl of Selkirk, by the Hudson's Bay Company, of a tract in this Winnipeg region. Before applying to the Bay Company, Selkirk got the opinion of Romilly and others that the company was competent to make such a grant (Bryce's *Manitoba*, 147; Mills' *Boundaries of Ontario*, p. 404; *House of Commons' Report*, 323). The map in M'Donell's *Narrative* shows the extent of this territorial grant, as was claimed. Selkirk by this time had become a large owner of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Of the conflict which ensued between the servants of the two companies, on the part of the Northwest Company to expel the Selkirk colonists, and on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company to protect them, we have a good account of a looker-on in Ross Cox's *Adventures on the Columbia River* (London, 1831; New York, 1832); but the trials which followed in the Canadian courts give us the conflict of testimony: *Report of the Proceedings connected with the disputes between the Earl of Selkirk and the Northwest Company at the Assizes held at York, in Upper Canada, October, 1818: From minutes taken in Court* (Montreal, 1819; reprinted, London, 1819).

*Report of trials in the Courts of Canada relative to the Destruction of the Earl of Selkirk's Settlement on the Red River, with observations.* By A[ndrew] Amps (London, 1820). This is accompanied by a map of the Red River settlement as it was in 1816.

The publications of this period are hardly impartial. They espouse one side or the other. What may be considered the official representation of the Northwest Company is *A Narrative of Occurrences in the Indian Countries of North America since the connection of the Earl of Selkirk with the Hudson's Bay Company, and his attempt to establish a colony on the Red River; with a detailed account of his Lordship's military expedition to, and subsequent proceedings at, Fort William* (London, 1817).<sup>3</sup>

The protest on Selkirk's part can be found in his *Sketch of the British fur trade in North America; with observations relative to the Northwest Company of Montreal* (London, J. Ridgeway, 1816), which originally appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, October, 1816; and in the publication in his interest, compiled by John Halkett, and called a *Statement respecting the Earl of Selkirk's Settlement upon the Red River; its destruction in 1815 and 1816; with observations upon a recent publication entitled "A narrative of occurrences in the Indian Countries,"* etc. (London, 1817). It is accompanied by a map by Arrowsmith, showing the Winnipeg country.<sup>4</sup> The letter book of Captain Miles Macdonell at the Selkirk Settlement, 1811-12, is given in Brymner's *Report on the Canadian Archives*, 1886.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also *Canadian Monthly* (v. 273); *Cornhill Mag.* (xxii. 159); "La traite au Nord-ouest et quelques notes sur la compagnie de la Baie-Hudson, par L. A. Prud'homme," in the *Revue Canadienne* (Jan., 1887, p. 16); and Emile Petitot on "The Athabasca District," with a map, in the *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.* (Nov., 1883).

<sup>2</sup> Bryce's *Manitoba*; *Manitoba Hist. Soc. Papers*, no. 4.

<sup>3</sup> We have a picture of life at Fort William, the Northwesters' principal post, in Ross Cox's *Columbia River*, and particularly in Gabriel Franchère's *Voyage à la Côte Nord-ouest de l'Amérique Septentrionale pendant les années 1810-1814* (Montreal, 1820), of which there is an English translation by J. V. Huntington (New York, 1854).

He had been one of the Astor expedition, and his natural story was much in Irving's mind, apparently, when he wrote his *Astoria*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. John Strachan's *Letter to the Earl of Selkirk on his settlement at the Red River, near Hudson's Bay* (London, 1816), and Alexander M'Donell's *Narrative of Transactions in the Red River Country from the Commencement of the Operations of the Earl of Selkirk till the summer of the year 1816* (London, 1819).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also Arrowsmith's *Map exhibiting the New Discoveries in the Interior Parts of North America, inscribed by permission to the Hon. Company of Adventurers of England trading in Hudson's Bay* (London, 1798-1811).

After Selkirk returned to England, in 1818, a motion was made in the House of Commons for all the official papers in the recent troubles, and in 1819 they were printed.

Selkirk died in 1820, and the next year the two companies were united, preserving only the name of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Sir George Simpson became governor. This story is told at length in Bancroft's *Northwest Coast*, ii. ch. 15.

John West's *Substance of a journal during the residence at the Red River Country and frequent excursion among the Northwest American Indians, 1820-1823* (London, 1824), and Keating's *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's Lake (Lake Winnipeg) in 1823* (London, 1825), become now of interest.

The later writers are variously inclined in their sympathies. Alexander Ross's *Red River Settlement, its rise, progress, and present state, with some account of the native races and its general history to the present day*, by Alexander Ross (London, 1856), is on the side of the elder company; and the same position is temperately sustained in George Bryce's *Manitoba, its infancy, growth, and present condition* (London, 1882).<sup>1</sup> The story of the Red River events, as well as the subsequent career of both companies after their enforced union, is sufficiently told, and with a good many helpful references, in Bancroft's *Northwest Coast*, with the aid of some manuscript accounts, as well as of the great mass of printed material. The story of the Northwest Coast is further continued by Bancroft in his *Oregon* and in his *British Columbia*.

The question of commercial intercourse with the Winnipeg country led to an exploration of the country between Lake Superior and the Red River settlement, of which a *Report*<sup>2</sup> was published, with a *Map of a part of the valley of Red River, north of the 49th parallel, to accompany a Report on the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition*, by H. Y. Hind. Of late years it has become a debatable question whether the route from Europe through Hudson's Bay may not be made commercially serviceable through a considerable part of the year. (Cf. Robert Bell's "Commercial Importance of Hudson's Bay" in the *Roy. Geog. Soc. Proc.*, October, 1881, with a map; W. Skellford in the *National Rev.*, London, vii. 541; C. R. Tuttle's, *Our North Land* (Toronto, 1885), ch. 28; *Science*, vii. 278; Charles N. Bell's *Northern Waters*, Winnipeg, 1885; and some papers published by the Manitoba Historical Society: no. 1, *Navigation of Hudson's Bay*; no. 2, *The Hudson's Bay Route*.) The rebellions in the Red River region, which followed upon the creation of the Province of Manitoba, fall on a later period than this volume is intended to embrace, but the sources of their history involve the results of the final extinction of the Hudson's Bay Company as a great monopoly.<sup>3</sup>

An account of the fur trade along the Pacific is the essential body of Bancroft's *Northwest Coast*, which is of use in tracing the transactions of the Hudson Bay Company in those regions, with its abundant references. He says in his preface:—

"During the summer of 1878 I made an extended tour in this territory for the purpose of adding to my material for its history. Some printed matter I found, not before in my possession. I was fortunate enough to secure copies of the letters of Simon Fraser, and the original journals of Fraser and John Stuart; also copies from the originals of the journals of John Work and W. F. Tolmie, the private papers of John McLoughlin, and a manuscript History of the Northwest Coast by A. C. Anderson. Through the kindness of Mr. John Charles, at the time chief of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific coast, I was given access to the archives of the fur company gathered at Victoria, and was permitted to make copies of important fort journals, notably those of Fort Langley and Fort Simpson. But most important of all were the historical and biographical dictations taken from the lips of several hundred of pioneers and earliest fur-hunters and settlers then living, by a short-hand reporter who accompanied me in my travels, and which were afterward written out, severally bound, and used in the usual way as material for history.

"It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of this information, given as it was by actors in the scenes represented, many of whom have since departed this life, and all of whom will soon be gone. To no small extent it is early historical knowledge absolutely rescued from oblivion, and which, if lost, no power on earth could reproduce. Conspicuous among those who thus bear testimony are Mrs. Harvey, who gave me a biographical sketch of her father, Chief Factor McLoughlin; John Tod, chief for a time of New Cale-

<sup>1</sup> He gives a list of his authorities. Cf. Donald Gunn's *Hist. of Manitoba to 1835, with a continuation to its admission to the Dominion by C. R. Tuttle* (Ottawa, 1880); Alexander Begg's *Creation of Manitoba and the history of the Red River Troubles* (Toronto, 1871); and John Macquon's *Manitoba and the Great Northwest* (1883).

<sup>2</sup> Henry Youle Hind's *Northwest Territory. Reports of progress; with a preliminary and general report on the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan exploring expedition, made under instructions from the provincial secretary, Canada. Printed by order of the Legislative Assembly* (Toronto, 1859); and the same author's *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857, and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Expedition of 1858* (London, 1860).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Alexander J. Russell's *Red River Country, Hud-*

*son's Bay and Northwest Territories considered in relation to Canada* (Ottawa, 1869; Montreal, 1870).

*Red River Insurrection; Hon. Wm. McDougall's Conduct Reviewed* (anon.).

*The Red River Insurrection Reviewed; letters to Hon. Jos. Howe by Wm. McDougall* (Toronto, 1870).

Alexander Begg's *Creation of Manitoba, or a history of the Red River Troubles* (Toronto, 1871).

Capt. Geo. Lightfoot Huyshe's *Red River Expedition* (London, 1871).

S. J. Dawson's *Report on the Red River Expedition of 1870, printed by order of the House of Commons. Reprint, with remarks on certain strictures published in England by an officer of the expeditionary force* (Ottawa, 1871).

*Report of the Select Committee on the Causes of the difficulties in the Northwest Territory in 1869-70* (Ottawa, 1874).

donia; Archibald McKinlay, in charge of Fort Walla-Walla at the time of the Whitman massacre; Roderick Finlayson, once in charge of Fort Victoria; A. C. Anderson, road-maker, explorer, and historian."

The English official record of the occupancy of Vancouver's Island is given in the *Charter of Grant of Vancouver's Island to the Hudson's Bay Company, and correspondence*, and the *Report on the Grant from the Com. of the Privy Council for Trade and Plantations* (1849); and in James Edward Fitzgerald's *Charter and Proceedings of the Hudson's Bay Company with reference to Vancouver Island* (London, 1849).

The rivalries of the English and American traders are necessarily set forth by Bancroft.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft's treatment of the Astoria enterprise is held to have a touch of spleen in it, by P. Koch in his paper on "Astoria and the Pacific Fur Trade," in the *Magazine of American History*, March, 1885, p. 289. Cf. Wm. Sturgis on the Northwest Fur Trade in *Hunt's Merchant's Magazine*, xiv.

